

MARCH 1924

Now 20 Cents

The SMART SET

A black and white illustration by E.J. Busenbark. In the center, a man with a large white ruff collar and a woman in a dark dress with large white polka dots are embracing. The man has his eyes closed and a pained or ecstatic expression. The woman is looking towards him. In the background, a devil character with horns and a mask is visible on the left. The entire scene is set against a backdrop of vertical lines and scattered dots, suggesting a party or a festive atmosphere. The title 'The SMART SET' is prominently displayed at the top in a stylized font.

Now
20 c.

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by

Edith Barnard Delano

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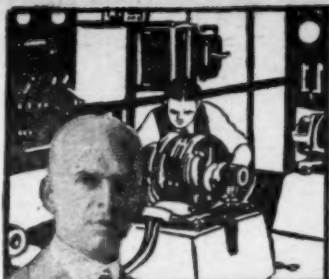


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S. Set—March

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Vol. LXXIII

MARCH, 1924

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Manuscripts must be addressed, "Editor of THE SMART SET"

Its responsibility is assumed for manuscripts that are not accompanied by a fully stamped, self-addressed envelope

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The Most Daring Book Ever Written!

Elinor Glyn, famous author of "Three Weeks," has written an amazing book that should be read by every man and woman—married or single. "The Philosophy of Love" is not a novel—it is a penetrating searchlight fearlessly turned on the most intimate relations of men and women. Read below how you can get this daring book at our risk—without advancing a penny.

WILL you marry the man you love, or will you take the one you can get?

If a husband stops loving his wife, or becomes infatuated with another woman, who is to blame—the husband, the wife, or the "other woman"?

Will you win the girl you want, or will Fate select your Mate?

Should a bride tell her husband what happened at seventeen?

Will you be able to hold the love of the one you cherish—or will your marriage end in divorce?

Do you know how to make people like you?

IF you can answer the above questions—if you know all there is to know about winning a woman's heart or holding a man's affections—you don't need "The Philosophy of Love." But if you are in doubt—if you don't know just how to handle your husband, or satisfy your wife, or win the devotion of the one you care for—then you must get this wonderful book. You can't afford to take chances with your happiness.

What Do YOU Know About Love?

DO you know how to win the one you love? Do you know why husbands, with devoted, virtuous wives, often become secret slaves to creatures of another "world"—and how to prevent it? Why do some men antagonize women, finding themselves beating against a stone wall in affairs of love? When is it dangerous to disregard convention? Do you know how to curb a headstrong man, or are you the victim of men's whims?

Do you know how to retain a man's affection always? How to attract men? Do you know the things that most irritate a man? Or disgust a woman? Can you tell when a man really loves you—or must you take his word for it? Do you know what you **MUST NOT DO** unless you want to be a "wall flower" or an "old maid"? Do you know the little things that make women like you? Why do "wonderful lovers" often become thoughtless husbands soon after marriage—and how can the wife prevent it? Do you know how to make marriage a perpetual honeymoon?

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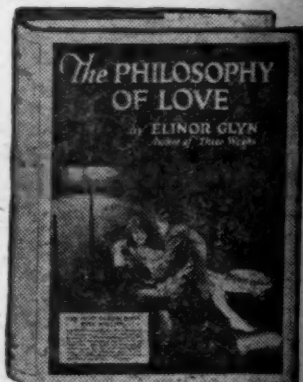
"The Philosophy of Love" is one of the most daring books ever written. It had to be. A book of this type, to be of real value, could not mince words. Every problem had to be faced with utter honesty, deep sincerity, and resolute courage. But while Madame Glyn calls a spade a spade—while she deals with strong emotions and passions in her frank, fearless manner—she nevertheless handles her subject so tenderly and sacredly that the book can safely be read by any man or woman. In fact, anyone over eighteen should be compelled to read "The Philosophy of Love"; for, while ignorance may sometimes be bliss, it is folly of the most dangerous sort to be ignorant of the problems of love and marriage. As one mother wrote us: "I wish I had read this book when I was a young girl—it would have saved me a lot of misery and suffering."

Certain shallow-minded persons may condemn "The Philosophy of Love." Anything of such an unusual character generally is. But Madame Glyn is content to rest her world-wide reputation on this book—the greatest masterpiece of love ever attempted!

SEND NO MONEY

YOU need not advance a single penny for "The Philosophy of Love." Simply fill out the coupon below—or write a letter—and the book will be sent to you on approval. When the postman delivers the book to your door—when it is actually in your hands—pay him only \$1.98, plus a few pennies postage, and the book is yours. Go over it to your heart's content—read it from cover to cover—and if you are not more than pleased, simply send the book back in good condition within five days and your money will be refunded instantly.

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WARNING!

The publishers do not care to send "The Philosophy of Love" to anyone under eighteen years of age. So, unless you are over eighteen, please do not fill out the coupon below.

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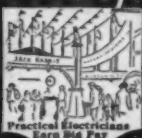
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March

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Y

Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.



A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.

But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages

ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.

Now, after many years of research, science announces unconditionally that lives clouded by the haze of too-early autumn can be illumined by the summer sun of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

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More to be Pitied than Scorned

By George Briggs

SHE was a tender and delicious damsel, a perfumed and shapely bit of white, round flesh. Her lips were the newest shade of scarlet; her stockings were half the thickness of a spider web; her filmy evening gown was tossed by the salty breeze, modeled lovingly upon her figure.

She looked into his eyes flirtatiously, though she had never seen him before. He was tall and handsome; he wore a well-cut dress suit; his body seemed brimming with energy. A wallet, fat with American bank notes, reposed in his hip pocket.

They were at the rail of an ocean liner, four days from England. The night was deserted; the deck was deserted. She stood almost within the hollow of his arm.

"I will meet you at one o'clock tonight," she said. They were the first words her lips had formed. He did not reply, but only looked at her. "I know that you are the only man in the world who matters!" she went on. "When we reach New York I'll desert my husband, bring my jewels with me—they are worth three hundred thousand dollars, at least—and we'll travel all over the world together! But, first, I want you to meet me on deck tonight, at one o'clock. Will you meet me?"

He did not say a word. He did not appear to have heard her. He neither understood nor spoke English, the poor Swede.



Carnival

By Robert Hillyer

I HAD said to my beloved,
"I can not give you bread.
Bitter is my bounty,
Your spirit shall be fed
With beauty and with sorrow,"—
So to my Love I said.

I had told the friend who served me,
"I can not give you gold.
Meagre is my payment,
A fire when you are cold,
A hand when you are stricken,"—
This to my friend I told.

Love set upon my table
A feast of wine and bread.
Friendship filled my coffers
With heaps of shining gold.
"Come, share my splendid banquet,"
So to my Love I said;
"Come, and enjoy my riches,"
This to my friend I told.

Now strangers in the street hear song
And laughter rings the whole night long.



If Spring Be Beautiful

By Mary Carolyn Davies

*If Spring be beautiful, and I,
Envy us not, for we must die.*

*For we must die—but triumph not,
We two will never be forgot.*



The Blue Duppy

By Edith Barnard Delano

CHAPTER I

I NEVER should have believed that such things could really happen, if I had not lived through that perfectly ghastly week. Things like that come on you unawares, creep upon you in the dark, little by little. Even now that it is all over, I find myself waking up in the night all cold with horror; and I have always been the practical sort, not given to fears or borrowing trouble. There are more ways than one to lay a ghost; and I know that I shall be haunted in the dark o' the moon until I write down everything just as it happened.

It began with that characteristic telegram of Nadine's:

"Going Mexico with Bill. Afraid let him go alone. Count on you look after Billy and house while away. NADINE."

Nadine is my sister. My own name is Susan; and I have always maintained that people grow up to fit their names. If you do not believe that, you have to grant a remarkable prescience on the part of your parents, and forget the perfectly good family reasons they had for naming you. Nadine is just what you'd expect her to be, and an adept at getting other people to do her work for her; and I am Susan. There you are!

Bill Remsen, my brother-in-law, is a dear, though I do think he spoils Nadine; but then, if he didn't, some other man would—she is that sort. The Remsens never can see why I will not live with them; they have a lovely, wild kind of a place in the hills, called

Spruce Lodge, where they spend a good part of the year; and old Bill is always more than cordial. But I have all the domesticity I want, what with attending to Nadine's errands in town and having to engage new servants for her every month or two, because the Lodge is so lonely; when I want more, I run up for a Sunday and have a romp with my six-year-old nephew Billy, and I am always perfectly well satisfied to get back to town and my automobile insurance business on Monday. Nadine thinks it is queer for a woman to like business; but I make a pretty good thing of it, if I do say it myself, and until the affair of the blue duppy I didn't want anything else.

If it hadn't been so late in the season and so frightfully hot in town, I might have been even madder over my sister's telegram than I was. I telephoned to Bill's office right away, and was told that he and Mrs. Remsen had left for Mexico that morning; Nadine had burned her bridges behind her—sent the telegram when it would be too late for me to protest. I couldn't help laughing when I thought of Bill's probable state of mind at having her tagging along to Mexico, of all places, at that time of year; then I sent a message for the Remsen car to meet me, and took the afternoon train, planning how I should take a few days' rest up there, and then engage a trained nurse and a housekeeper, and with a clear conscience leave little Billy and the house in more capable hands than mine.

I knew there were good servants there for once; only the week before I had sent up two nice, soft-voiced

Jamaicans, just up from the island and trained in English families; one knows what that means. Even their names were pretty—Rose and Adossa. I did have my doubts as to how they would get on with Estelle, the ultra-citified, rather pert colored maid who was almost an old family retainer, having been with Nadine since the winter before; but when I suggested that to Nadine over the telephone she laughed, and said that Estelle was so deep in an affair with the new chauffeur that she wouldn't have time to think about anything else. So, on the whole I felt pleasantly certain that I would not have any servant problem on my hands.

My first surprise was in finding Aunt Essie in the car outside the station. I had not known of her being at Nadine's, but I must admit that she seemed to have brought the atmosphere of Vermont with her. She looked as though she had just come from a lively meeting of the Missionary Society; she was sitting up very straight, with her bonnet a little on one side, and her lips pressed together in the way she has when she disapproves of something. I hope I appreciate Aunt Essie; she is almost the only relation we have, on father's side. But I was not brought up in Vermont, and—oh, well!

I told her how glad I was to see her, and kissed her cheek, but her grimness did not relax. "I can see you're surprised at me being here, Susan. Not any more'n I am," said she, as we drove away from the station.

"I'm surprised and delighted," I told her. "I've been meaning to run up to Dorset—"

"That's all right," she interrupted. "I never blame a body when they're busy and useful. You take after the Atwaters, Nadine—"

"Yes—Nadine—"

She sniffed—there's no other word for it. "I don't need you to tell me anything about Nadine. She's my own grand-niece, and I guess I ought to know her by this time. All I can say is, I'm mighty glad you've come, Susan.

Now I can go home tomorrow," she added.

"But, Auntie dear, you've come for a visit, a real visit, surely," I began.

"I dunno what I've come for," she said, and two little pink spots appeared in her cheeks. "I thought I did, when I got the telegram. Seems like a month o' Sundays, but 'twas unly three-four days ago. 'Come at once. Nadine,' was all it said. I thought something had happened, and I put on the black I had when your pa died, and got the grocer to cash me a check. And when I got here Nadine was knockin' balls around on the grass in front of the house, and—"

"I think she must have gotten suddenly homesick for you, Aunt Essie!" I laughed.

"That's as may be. All I know is, she didn't say a thing she wanted of me, till yesterday forenoon. Then it come out she was countin' on me stayin' here and runnin' the house and taking care of little William while she's away. I just up and said I wouldn't. I'm not used to Blacks. The ones she's got here don't even talk like folks. I told her I'd stay and do for Billy if she'd turn 'em all out, but she wasn't willing to do that."

"Heavens! Send away the servants! I should think not!" I cried.

"Yes. That's what she said. Well, you can look after 'em. The way they use up the sugar is something awful. I unly hope there won't anything worse happen while Nadine's gone. You'll have your hands full, with all those people here and more on the way."

I gasped; this, indeed, was more than I had looked for. "Who is here, and who's coming?" I managed to ask.

"Some folks named Car-something's coming tonight, and—" she gave me an ominous look—"that brother of his is already here, and two other men with him."

"Oh, goodness! Not Julian!" I exclaimed.

"Ain't any other brother, is there?"

Not but what that one's enough, I should say!"

In my heart I agreed with her. I suppose there is somebody like that in every family, if it's big enough. Julian is the sort of man that everybody always expects to turn out a black sheep, but who never seems to get any farther toward blackness than to make himself a general nuisance. Dear old Bill is always awfully nice to him. I have heard him speak of him as 'poor devil,' and Nadine says she knows he is forever lending him money. Julian has the habit of going away for long intervals and not letting them hear from him, then arriving, a little bit shabby but with the air of a conqueror, at the worst possible moment, as when, for example, there is going to be a dinner party, or the house is full of people. Nadine wants to make a good impression on for Bill's sake; and Nadine has to keep an eye on him every minute, for fear he'll try to borrow from the men or get them to go into one of his schemes. For Julian has as many schemes as there are leaves on a green bay tree; I have had them presented to me with the most persuasive arguments, the consequence being that Julian always regards me with a sad and wistful look, seeming to imply that if I had only let him direct my investments I'd be a multi-millionaire by this time, and he would, too.

So, altogether, the fact that Julian was in the house while Bill and my sister were away, and that strangers were coming, gave me enough to think about the rest of the way home. I saw my plans for a housekeeper and a trained nurse vanishing; I knew I should have to stay at the Lodge until I could get rid of all the guests, anyway. But my first sight of Julian reassured me; he seemed quite prosperous, or, at least, buoyant. I wondered why, until he brought his friend Mr. Carrington Heath and introduced him; then I attributed his joyousness to the prospects that so substantial a person would undoubtedly suggest to Julian.

If I felt any annoyance at the offi-

cious way in which he played host, I managed not to show it; after all, the house belonged to his brother as much as to my sister. He carried my bags into the living-hall after Aunt Essie had refused his assistance in getting out of the car, saying she hadn't lost the use of her limbs; but not before he had said to George, the chauffeur, with what you might call a lordly air:

"You will have to meet the six o'clock train, for Mr. and Mrs. Kerr-Cooper."

I had not noticed the new chauffeur before; he was quite a good-looking darkey, with a scar across one cheek; he touched his cap with military precision, and Mr. Heath and I followed Aunt Essie into the house; Julian was not in the least abashed at her snubbing him.

CHAPTER II

THE big, raftered hall at the Lodge is the general living-room; Adossa was bringing in the tea tray as we went in, and gave me a smile and a nice little bobby curtsy, and called me 'Mees H'Atwater.' Oh, I foresaw no trouble at all with the servants. It was just as well; and nothing could have forewarned me of what was to come. While we were having tea I found out about the Kerr-Coopers; Julian was rather funny about them.

"Old Bill did the nice thing once too often for his peace of mind," said he. "Met these people on his last business trip to England—made a lot of money during the war—shoes or kettles or something. Bill told 'em to be sure and stop with him when they came over—you know his way! It wasn't until he got their letter saying they'd be here today that Nadine decided she couldn't let Bill go to Mexico alone. Flew right up through the roof—said she wasn't going to be left at home to amuse any grubby war-profiteers who probably dropped their aitches, all that sort of thing. Old Bill gave up. Great girl, Nadine!"

It was just as well that I didn't

reply to that, because, after all, Nadine's my sister; but just at that moment my nephew Billy arrived like a small avalanche, and began hugging me and telling me how glad he was I had come and that there were new puppies at the garage; and a man's voice said, cheerfully:

"Hello, everybody! Hello, Susan! Anything left to eat?"

I looked over Billy's head, and had my second surprise; Dr. Alexander Cameron was the last person I should have expected to find at Spruce Lodge. The last time I had seen him was at a base hospital in France, four days before the armistice. I knew he had gone into Germany with the Army of Occupation, and if he was too piqued to write to me, I could get on without it—though one does hate to lose a friend. Well, if he was going to let by-gones take care of themselves, I could play the game as well as he could!

"Hello, Sandy!" said I, and flattered myself that I said it as though I had seen him yesterday. "There's some cake left."

"Thanks," said he, and grinned at me. "I haven't a desire on earth beyond cake!"

Aunt Essie said something about eating between meals, but nobody seemed to hear; I was thinking that Sandy had explained himself perfectly well, and I was satisfied, if he was, though the last time I saw him his desire had been for something quite other than cake. Then somebody said the Kerr-Coopers' train must be late, and Billy began to look sleepy; so I left Julian to play host to the impending arrivals, and took my nephew off to bed. I was just finishing dressing when the girl Estelle knocked at my door. She handed me a small velvet-covered box.

"I found this on Mrs. Remsen's dressing-table after she left, Miss, and I thought it ought to be in your keeping, with all these strange servants about the house. If anything happens to it, it won't be me that's took it," she added, with a toss of her head.

I thanked her, and took the box to

the light and opened it. Nadine's wedding gift from Bill, a diamond pendant hung on a slender thread of chain with tiny diamonds set at intervals—I knew how sentimental Nadine was about it, and supposed that was the reason of her keeping it in the house in summer, instead of having it in the safe-deposit with the rest of her things. Well, I thought, it would be safe enough in the drawer of the little desk in my room, until I should get back to town; it's so easy to think things! I tucked it away, and hurried down to the hall; I had heard the arrival of the English guests, and wanted to be ready to welcome them when they should come down for dinner. I need not have hurried, for Sandy Cameron was the only person in the room when I got there.

"Well, Susan! Here we are!" he remarked, cheerfully. I had almost forgotten how cheerful he was, and how big.

"Obviously," I returned. "But I don't know that that explains anything."

He chuckled. "So I need explaining, do I? That's easy! Out of the service for good. Ran into Julian the day after I landed. Asked me to come up here with him. Both lunched with old Bill, who said to come along. So I came. Anything else?"

"Julian will try to get you to go into one of his schemes," I warned him.

"Ah! Julian is furthering one of my schemes, at present! You don't suppose I've given up, just because you turned me down four times, do you?"

I thought it best to ignore that. "Who is this Mr. Heath?" I asked.

"Never saw him before. Friend of Julian's. Explorer or something. Seems like a good fellow."

Just then Mr. and Mrs. Kerr-Cooper (they pronounced the name Carr-Coooooper) came downstairs, and they really were not as bad as I expected, from what Julian had said. Mr. Kerr-Cooper was a heavily built man with an inquiring expression, and a look of being surprised at things; his wife was

tall and very thin, with fading reddish hair and near-sighted eyes for which she did not wear glasses. She gave me the impression of being somewhat timid, and they both took my explanations of Nadine's absence as pleasantly as could be, and didn't seem to find anything strange in it; they had known that Bill would be away.

They were both immaculately dressed and quite as though they were going to the opera; Mrs. Kerr-Cooper's gown was cut very low, especially in the back, and she had on quantities of jewels. I myself had on a last year's organdie, and Aunt Essie appeared in something brown and shiny, with white sprigs in it; the waist fastened chastely up to her chin, and Grandma Atwater's hair brooch was her only ornament, if you could call it that. She kept her eyes away from Mrs. Kerr-Cooper as much as she could, especially when the lady turned her back; once she closed her eyes tight, and Julian winked at me.

But not even Aunt Essie's expression could mar everybody's enjoyment of the excellent dinner that Rose cooked; and Adossa's service was perfect. Mr. Kerr-Cooper asked a great many questions; I discovered that his wife's conversation consisted largely of saying "Fancy!" The only uneasy moment I had was when Mr. Heath described a copper mine in Peru that he was exploiting; I thought Julian was ominously quiet, and Mr. Kerr-Cooper all too interested. I began to wonder how I could warn him about Julian's little ways; and it was the first time I had any suspicion about Mr. Heath. He was really awfully nice and jovial, and quite good looking, with his almost white hair and his bronzed skin. He seemed to have been all over the world; I wondered where Julian had managed to make friends with anyone so altogether right—which made it all the harder to believe in what happened later.

We went into the hall to have coffee, and as the evening was a little chilly somebody lighted the fire. I slipped upstairs to see that Billy was all right,

and when I came down again Mr. Heath was standing on the hearth with his coffee-cup in his hand, and I gathered that the talk had somehow moved on to Jamaica, and the Kerr-Coopers had but lately come from there.

"One thing we missed," Mr. Kerr-Cooper was saying. "Odd, how they keep things to themselves, those natives. Couldn't persuade them to give me any information. And yet they tell me there is still a great deal of that old witchcraft of theirs going about, you know, beneath the surface of things."

"Ah—Obeah! Yes," said Mr. Heath, and laughed. "Funny you should speak of that. I've made rather a study of it myself."

"Fancy!" said Mrs. Kerr-Cooper. "Do tell us!"

Mr. Heath drew something out of his waistcoat pocket, and put it into her hand. Of course the rest of us all went closer, except Aunt Essie, who had refused coffee because it kept her awake, and who was knitting—rather, I suspected, as an excuse to keep her eyes down. She might as well have been a sofa, for all she contributed to the conversation.

"But what is it?" Mrs. Kerr-Cooper asked. As she held it out on her heavily ringed hand, it seemed no more than a bit of bluish stone, crudely carved into the semblance of a serpent coiled ready to strike.

"That," said Mr. Heath, "is an obi-stone. The obi-man's sign is a coiled snake—blue. I got it from an old chap who thought I saved him from a horrible death. As a matter of fact, I merely happened to arrive on the scene when some of his neighbors were preparing his funeral pyre a little ahead of time. He was good and scared, and came to claim the white man's protection. There was a lot of excitement in the village—it's a mere handful of huts, in the interior, where the friend I was going to visit has a coffee plantation a few miles farther on. The negroes believed the old fellow was working spells on them, and I always suspected that his giving me the obi-stone was by way

of destroying evidence. The natives were reticent; I couldn't find out anything he had done except to cause a rain of stones in the house of the head man, and that he was accused of owning a duppy that would do his bidding on anybody."

"A rain of stones! Oh, I say!" Mr. Kerr-Cooper exclaimed.

"A duppy! What on earth is a duppy?" I asked.

"Oh, a duppy's a ghost—just that, except that you mustn't meet one face to face, or he'll carry you off and make a meal of you—his grave being his dining-room."

"That ain't what I call decent," said Aunt Essie.

"But a rain of stones! Just fancy!" said Mrs. Kerr-Cooper, and her husband added, "Ah—volcanic, of course."

"No," said Mr. Heath, "not volcanic. That's the strangest part of it. Plain seashore pebbles, and that in a part of the island where there were none within miles, and where the natives had never so much as caught a glimpse of the sea."

"Good story," said Sandy Cameron; I thought he was looking a little peeved at Mr. Heath's taking the floor like that.

"Good enough story," Mr. Heath agreed. "But I've seen the thing happen, myself. Found them on the floor in dozens, one morning in my friend the coffee-planter's house, with all the doors and windows locked overnight, too. His servants were wild; said it foreboded disaster."

"Did it?" I asked.

"To the old chap I had brought along with me, certainly. He had to move on. That was when he gave me the obitstone. Said it possessed all the powers of darkness, would keep away duppies, and bring me luck—that's why I carry it about with me. The old man declared it was brought from Africa by his grandfather; and as a matter of fact it could not have come from Jamaica originally. No stone like that on the island."

By that time we had finished our

coffee, and were sitting around the fireplace. "It's all nonsense," said Aunt Essie. "There's no such things as ghosts."

Mrs. Kerr-Cooper looked at her as though she had not seen her before, or as though she were assailing the morality of King George; Mr. Kerr-Cooper exclaimed, "Oh, but—I'm sure I—that is, in the Duke of Buckminster's family—ah—"

"Well," said Mr. Heath, in his pleasant, easy way, "until I went to Jamaica I firmly believed that ghosts, like beauty, were in the eye of the observer. But, upon my word, after some of the doings there—well, I don't know!"

"Shoot, old man," said Julian. "Give it to us!"

"That little affair of the pebbles in my friend's house was odd enough—and I'm willing to swear to it," Mr. Heath went on. "But after I left his house and crossed over to the other side of the island I came upon something else. The chap I visited went away for a few days; and as the negro servants all go home at night, and are apt to be light-fingered, he asked me to be sure and lock the doors every night; all the windows had wire-mesh screens fastened in. The least I could do was to follow out his instructions, particularly as I usually go off as sound as the Seven Sleepers, wherever I am; but after the first night or two in that house I kept waking up with the feeling that someone was in my room. But there wasn't; I got out of bed several times, and found the locks all right."

"Then—the fourth night, I think it was—I was brought awake by a woman's scream outside. I got out in short order, and found one of the maids running about with something over her head, bumping into things. Yelled blue murder when I grabbed her, and that brought out everybody in the place, apparently. When the excitement quieted down, I gathered that she had met a duppy, and as the only way to escape a duppy's charms is just not to see him, she had thrown her apron over her head and was going it blind."

"I found myself quite interested in duppies, for lack of something better to think about; but the darkeys wouldn't talk much. What I learned I gathered bit by bit, from one and another. A duppy inhabits his own grave, which, as I've said, he turns into a dining-room whenever he can get hold of a victim. One variety of duppy has the rather indelicate habit of shedding his skin at sunrise, and it resembles the dried skin of a snake. All duppies walk about two feet above the ground, and they are up to all sorts of tricks, trying to make you catch their eye, after which you belong to them. If you come across a bottle with a nail and a cockroach in it, you may be sure that an ob-man has wished a duppy on you; after which you may as well resign yourself to your fate. The most you can hope for is that you will give the duppy indigestion.

"Of course it is all just childish superstition, and I was considerably amused by it. But that night I locked my doors again; and, by Jove, I woke up with a jump. The moonlight was streaming in my window, though it was almost day; and I tell you I distinctly saw, crossing that beam of light, a bluish figure walking about two feet above the floor. I made a leap for it—and it wasn't there! I searched the shadows, tried the doors and windows, even went outside; there wasn't a thing to be seen anywhere. When I went back to my room at last, the moonlight was pale in the dawn; my foot touched something on the floor beside my bed. It was a dried snake skin; and that morning I discovered a blue mark, for all the world like a crude drawing of my ob-stone, on the window sill."

While we were laughing and asking questions, the maid Adossa had come quietly into the room to carry away the coffee things. I heard a little gasp from her, and saw her look at something on the tray.

"It's all nonsense," Aunt Essie was saying. "There's no such things as—"

But she never finished. A shriek and the clatter of breaking china and tink-

ling silver came together. Adossa was standing like a graven image of an old, old fear, her eyes rolled up until the whites showed like half moons, her rich brown skin suddenly a dusky, purplish gray. Then, even before Dr. Cameron was at her side, she fell at full length on the floor, across the wreckage of china and spilled coffee.

CHAPTER III

It is hard to describe the hour that followed. It was startling enough to have the girl drop in our midst, and shriek like that, just when we had been hearing about duppies and things; but Sandy Cameron worked over her for half an hour before there were any signs of returning consciousness; when she finally came-to, it was only to shiver and moan and roll her eyes. We got her up to bed, and I was heartily glad that Rose was already in her room and snoring. The girl Estelle was nowhere to be found, but the doctor thought the best thing for poor Adossa was quiet, and said she would not need nursing; he declared that she must have caught part of our conversation, and simply been frightened out of her wits; he was sure she would be all right in the morning.

While we were upstairs Aunt Essie had been busying herself clearing up the awful mess on the floor; she faced Mr. Heath with her most severe expression. "Here," she said, "here's that blue snake of yours. Somebody must 'a' put it on the coffee tray. That's what comes o' such lies—scarin' a poor ignorant heathen out of her senses."

I saw that Aunt Essie was confusing our well-trained colored maids with the wards of her Missionary Society, but Mr. Heath was terribly contrite and apologetic—not that it was really his fault, as far as I could see. I know everybody's nerves were rather jumpy; I couldn't blame Julian for passing around Bill's best cigars, and even envied the men the comfort they got out of them. It was not long before we all said good night.

I didn't sleep very well for some hours, and then it seemed scarcely a minute before Billy was trying to sit on me, and demanding a story about Indians; but somehow I didn't yearn for Indians that morning, and told him to run along. He's always a cheerful little soul.

"All right," said he. "I guess I'll go down and see how everybody is. Mummy told me to be very kind to everybody while she's away. I'm taking care of everything for Mummy, you know."

After breakfast the four men went off to Bill's little five-hole golf course, and I had Aunt Essie and Mrs. Kerr-Cooper on my hands until luncheon-time. Adossa had come down rather trembly, and I knew that she had retailed her experience of the night before to the other maids; Rose was jumpy and cross, and Estelle went around with an air more superior than ever. I was glad when the men got back, for Aunt Essie simply would not talk at all, and I found conversation with Mrs. Kerr-Cooper pretty uphill work. After luncheon Billy demanded to be amused, and Mr. Heath offered to tell him stories. The little boy looked at him for a moment, then turned away.

"Thank you very much," he said formally, "but I guess I'd raver have Sandy."

Aunt Essie sniffed, and I wondered what the afternoon was going to be like, when Julian came to the rescue and suggested a long drive in the big car. Aunt Essie said she didn't risk her life when she didn't have to, and Mr. Heath declined; but the others went off for the afternoon, and I went walking with Mr. Heath. He was really just as nice as could be, though still quite depressed at the result of his duppy tales.

"Of course I know that Obeah stuff is just nonsense, as your aunt says, Miss Atwater; but I can't help wishing these servants of yours were not Jamaicans. I'd hate to think of your having trouble with them while your sister's away, and all owing to me."

I told him he must not feel that way, and that there would not be any trou-

ble; but when Aunt Essie came into my room while I was dressing for dinner I was not quite so sure.

"The cook says the other one's been witched," she informed me. "There's going to be trouble in this house. I feel it."

"I do wish you wouldn't talk to the servants, Aunt Essie," I said. "The only way to deal with them is not to take any notice at all of their notions. Please, please keep out of the kitchen."

"And let 'em throw away all the left-overs! All right—if that's what you call taking care of Nadine's house while she's away." She went toward the door with her head up, but turned to remark, "I suppose you noticed how William felt toward that Mr. Heath? You can always trust children and cats. They know!"

After dinner I somehow found myself in a corner of the terrace with Sandy Cameron; and Sandy was not in what you would call a balmy mood. "Look here, Susan," he began, "you want to be careful with that fellow Heath. Nobody knows anything about him."

"How nice of you to have me on your mind," said I. "But, do you know, it strikes me that you and he both have the same credentials. You're both here on Julian's invitation."

"Don't be a dunce," said Sandy. "And another thing—what do you know about that fellow George, the chauffeur?"

"Oh, my goodness! What on earth's the matter with you?" I think I was justified in being provoked. "What do I need to know about my sister's guests and my brother-in-law's servant, please tell me?"

"I'm jolly well going to tell you. It's my opinion Heath's an adventurer. All that talk about copper mines in Peru, from a pal of Julian's, with Kerr-Cooper here, a man with a mint of new money to throw away; and then the rot about duppies and obi-stones! That was not mere chance, my dear girl! He hauled that stuff into the conversation for some purpose, you mark me!"

"Sandy, what an interesting talker you are! And what have you to tell me about the chauffeur? Do go on!"

"Well, I came across that fellow George overseas; in fact, that scar on his face is what's left of a little patching up I did—and not of a wound got in battle, either! I'm almost certain that fellow was dismissed from the army with a bad record. I wish I knew hold old Bill happened to engage him."

"You're a cheerful soul, aren't you?" I asked, and walked away and left him. Julian came out to the terrace as I went in, and when he asked me, an hour or so later, to help him lock up for the night, I knew that Sandy had confided his doubts about the chauffeur. I did not ask, however, and I secretly thought it silly to lock all the doors and windows; I knew Bill never did, for the place is miles from the highway.

I had some letters to write when I got to my room, and it was when I turned the first page face downward that I noticed the queer thing, or sign, on my blotter. It suddenly seemed to jump right up at me. Blue—a broad blue coil, for all the world like a rough drawing of Mr. Heath's blue obi-stone. Just a blue mark curled around on itself, with one end coming out like the head of a serpent ready to strike. I confess I was startled; in fact, I jumped up and looked all around me, and there certainly was a creepy feeling down my spine. Then I laughed at myself for a goose. There was nothing unusual in the room; the moonlight was streaming through the windows, and the only other light was from the little reading-light on the desk. I turned the blotter, and finished my letters.

I suppose it was long past midnight when at last I was ready for bed; I was just about to pull up the blanket when a crash sounded through the house.

It did not take me long to get into bath-gown and slippers again. In the hall I came face to face with Aunt Essie, with a shawl thrown over her night array.

"Somebody's broke in!" she whispered, grasping my arm. "I heard 'em!"

"Hush!" I whispered; we crept together to the head of the stairs. I have not said that the lower floor of Nadine's house is nearly all taken up by the hall, a big room with raftered ceiling and dark paneling; the stairs come down at one side, and just at their foot is the door that opens into Bill's little library, with the dining-room back of that. There is a big fireplace at one end of the hall, and all across one side there are long windows that open upon the terraces, lovely tiled places with the long grass and wild flowers growing right up against them. From where Aunt Essie and I stood at the top of the stairway we could see the door into the library, and some of the long windows. There wasn't a sound from below, but the familiar room looked weird in the moonlight.

Suddenly Aunt Essie's voice broke the silence; I noticed that it was shriller than usual. "You come out o' that! We know you're there!"

I grabbed her. "Don't!" I said. "There's no use waking everybody!" But the words had no sooner left my lips than I heard Aunt Essie gasp; and no wonder. It sounds utterly impossible as I tell it, but we both saw it—a slim, bluish shape moving across the moonlight, across the darker place at the foot of the stairs, and into the library; and it moved about two feet above the floor.

Aunt Essie sat down on the top step. There was a queer sound in her throat. . . .

Nothing else happened. I moved past her and started down the stairs. "You may be going to your death," whispered Aunt Essie. "I'm coming, too!"

There was an overturned chair near one of the long windows, but every window was locked, and all the outside doors. And there was not another thing unusual about the house; we went into every cupboard and every room on the lower floor. Just as we came back

into the hall a man's voice sounded over the banisters.

"Anything wrong down there? I thought I heard a noise," it said; and the voice was Mr. Heath's.

"Can't a body come downstairs if they're a mind to?" Aunt Essie snapped; and we heard a word of apology from Mr. Heath, then heard his door close.

"Now what do you make o' that?" Aunt Essie demanded. "That man's up to something!"

"What an idea, Aunt Essie!" said I. "He couldn't have passed us on the stairs! And he couldn't have—have walked—two feet above the floor!"

There was a click in Aunt Essie's throat. "It's all—all nonsense!" said she. "There's no such a thing as a—ghost."

"Don't you suppose I know that as well as you do?" I demanded, and was only half ashamed of my rudeness; my nerves were jangling. "It must have been one of the maids."

Together we went up to that part of the house where the maids slept; Rose had her door open, and was lying on her back with her mouth wide open, breathing out loud; Adossa was obviously asleep, but moaning a little. Estelle's door was closed, but when I put my ear against it I could hear her breathing quietly.

"I am going back to bed," I said.

"High time," said Aunt Essie. "Queer doin's in this house."

CHAPTER IV

IN the morning Aunt Essie looked paler and grimmer than usual. I think we were both a little ashamed of our adventure of the night before; I am sure neither of us said anything about it. I had another nice walk with Mr. Heath that day; when we came back, Julian and Mr. Kerr-Cooper were in Bill's library, and Julian seemed to be displaying some papers—maps, or something of that sort. Mr. Heath joined them, with what I thought to be undue alacrity; and I found my small nephew upstairs with Mrs. Kerr-

Cooper, playing with her jewels. He had them all spread out on the bed; there was a wonderful collection of them, more than any woman who was not English would have dreamed of carrying about with her. I remonstrated as gently as I could, saying that they were too valuable for little boys to play with; but Mrs. Kerr-Cooper said it was quite all right, and Billy informed me that he liked 'shinies,' and that his mummy always let him play with hers.

That night after dinner we had a game of bridge while Aunt Essie knitted; Mr. Heath and Julian cut in, and as far as I know Doctor Alexander Cameron kept himself company out on the terrace. Julian and I locked up the house as before, and I was glad enough to have a good night's sleep.

I awoke to that Sunday quiet that seems to enwrap the world even when we have lost count of the calendar. The sun was warm and bright, little Billy's voice sounded cheerfully from under the windows, where he was having a game of ball with Sandy.

As I stood there fastening my blouse I could see the chauffeur washing one of the cars outside the garage, and indoors somebody was whistling, doubtless as he dressed; there was nothing in the world to mark the day as different from any other beautiful Sunday in late summer. Then, suddenly, Aunt Essie burst into my room without knocking.

"Come quick's you can!" she cried. "She's having another fit!"

I never did see why old people have to be such early risers. I got downstairs in half a minute. The scene in the kitchen was a curious one. Every detail of it came to me at a glance. Rose, the cook, was in a rocking chair, swaying back and forth, her apron over her head; and she was howling. I never heard such a sound from human throat before. Estelle was standing in the middle of the floor with a curious little smile on her face, an ugly curl of the lips that meant scorn and a sort of amused disdain. Adossa was also standing, some silver knives and forks in one hand, the other holding a small

blue object at which she stared, her lips parted, on her face such an expression of sheer terror as I have never seen before or since.

"What on earth is the matter here? Rose, stop that noise at once!" Rose's wails only increased, but Estelle said, with a toss of her head, and using her most careful enunciation:

"These people are so superstitious, Miss! So ignorant!"

I ignored her and went up to the other. "What is the matter with you, Adossa? What is that you have in your hand?"

She did not look at me; her eyes rolled up until the whites showed. I took the blue thing out of her hand, and held it to the light. It was a small blue bottle which had once contained a patent medicine of very familiar make, though the label had been removed; it was corked tight, and contained a bent nail and what seemed to be a beetle of some sort.

"Hit's obi-sign, meestress!" said Rose. Apparently curiosity had made her stop her noise and take her apron away from her face. "H'Adossa, she got de obi-sign! She gwine meet de duppy! Ho, my lord! H'Adossa got witched!"

The silver fell from Adossa's hand to the floor with a clatter, and the girl began to tremble violently. "What do you know about this, Estelle?" I demanded; for Estelle seemed to be the only one of the three who had retained her senses.

"She says it jumped out at her when she opened the silver drawer, miss. I don't believe in such things, myself!"

"That's all nonsense!" exclaimed Aunt Essie, who had followed me into the kitchen. "Bottles don't jump! Who'd put such a thing as that into the sideboard? How'd it get there?"

"Hit's Obeah, meestress," said Rose. "Obi gets in where obi-man sends him. Now H'Adossa gwine meet de duppy—ho, my lord!"

"We've had enough of that nonsense, Rose," said I, sternly. "Adossa, go up to your room and lie down. Estelle

will take your work for today. Breakfast is to be served in ten minutes."

I confess I was glad to get out of that kitchen. I was glad, too, that none of the guests except Sandy was in the hall; and as it was no use pretending to Sandy that nothing had happened, after he had once looked at Aunt Essie's face and mine, I told him all about it. He rubbed his chin and whistled.

"Oh-ho! A bottle with a nail and a bug in it! What was that yarn of Heath's about a bottle with a nail and a—"

"Now look here, Sandy Cameron!" I interrupted. "If you're trying to imply that a man like Mr. Heath would stoop to play such a trick as that on a poor ignorant girl like Adossa—"

"There's something going to happen in this house," said Aunt Essie. "Children and cats—"

"I am not trying to imply anything whatever about a man like Mr. Heath, my dear girl," said Sandy, with a grin that seemed to me nothing less than malicious. "I was interested in the coincidence, nothing more! We'll be having duppies around, if this sort of thing keeps up! Hooray for the duppies! Let 'em come!"

"We've had one already," said I, and could have bitten my tongue out after I had said it. Of course there was nothing for it, then, but to tell him the whole thing, and when I had done so Sandy was serious enough. Even he was impressed, and for once Aunt Essie said not a word.

But the others were coming downstairs. All he had time to say was, "Better keep that under your hat, Susan," which I recognized as good advice; and of course I had meant to, anyway.

Estelle was decidedly sulky as she served breakfast, but everything went off well enough. The others seemed to be able to amuse themselves; I went upstairs to do the work that was usually Estelle's, and Aunt Essie came up to help me.

"There's something queer going on in this house. I feel it between my

shoulder blades," she said, once; but I did not reply. I couldn't, and say anything polite.

The only thing out of the way that I noticed that morning was while I was doing my own room, and happened to look out of the window. George the chauffeur was still busy outside the garage, but the girl Adossa was there, instead of being up in her room. She was talking to him, but apparently he was paying as little attention to her as he could; I saw her gesture once or twice, almost appealingly, I thought. Then George straightened up, said something to her, and went into the garage, shutting the door behind him. She waited a minute, her head drooping; then she came back toward the house. About half way, Estelle met and passed her; Adossa shrank out of the way, and I knew Estelle laughed as she tossed that saucy head of hers with its artificially straightened hair.

"I'll settle that!" I thought, and went downstairs. Adossa was already in the kitchen, with her head on the kitchen table, sobbing; Rose was saying something, angrily, but stopped as I passed through. I heard Estelle and George laughing, but when I stood in the garage door they stopped suddenly.

"Have you finished your work, Estelle?" I asked, suavely. "I came out to tell George to have the car ready for the afternoon. I think Mrs. Remsen always lets him take the maids out on Sundays, doesn't she?"

The girl slipped away toward the house, and the chauffeur thanked me politely enough; I noticed for the first time that his accent was slightly like the Jamaicans'.

"Oh, are you from Jamaica, too, George?" I asked, casually.

"Not since a long while ago, Miss," he replied, touching his forehead; again I noticed the conspicuous scar on his cheek that Dr. Cameron had spoken of. But, I reasoned, Bill must have known all about him when he engaged him; and anyway, the outside servants were not my affair. George was not one of my troubles, nor going to be; I felt my-

self fully capable of managing the flirtatious Estelle. How little I knew!

I was glad enough when the servants got off for their drive. Adossa had not wanted to go, but I insisted that the air would do her good. The Kerr-Coopers and Mr. Heath went off for a tramp; Aunt Essie was sitting in the hall with a hymn-book in her hand; Julian and Billy were having an uproarious game of hide-and-seek all over the house. I went up to my room and sat down at the desk, but I couldn't make up my mind whether to take a nap or write letters; then I happened to think of Nadine's pendant there in the little drawer. With that thought came the recollection of what Sandy Cameron had said about the chauffeur; I wondered whether I was doing right in keeping a jewel of such value in the house at all, and whether I had not better send it up to the bank. I opened the drawer and took out the little velvet box; the dainty chain slipped across my palm, the jewel shone up at me. I had never possessed anything like it; it was really a splendid thing, and must have cost a small fortune. So careless of Nadine to leave it lying around—and so like her! Old Bill was a darling. So thoughtful, so indulgent, so—so—

Something fell against my window-screen, and I stood up, laying the pendant in its box on the desk. I looked out; Sandy Cameron was on the lower terrace, grinning up at me and beckoning. "Come on out!" he called.

I shook my head, but he said, "Please come! I want to show you something—no fooling!—something to do with this morning!"

I remembered the blue bottle, thought he must have discovered something else. I passed Julian on the stairs, elaborately tiptoeing on his search for Billy. "Ssh! I'm 'it!" said he, with a chuckle; he was evidently having as good a time as the youngster himself. Aunt Essie was nodding; I passed through the hall without waking her.

"Funny thing," said Sandy, when I joined him. "Thought you ought to know about it. I found this on my

bureau, and I'll swear I never put it there!"

He gave me a small piece of crumpled wrapping paper; on it was a blue mark, roughly drawn, as though someone had been attempting to draw a serpent coiled ready to spring. "Looks like a cave-man's picture of Heath's blue obi-stone, doesn't it?" he asked.

I felt my head go queer. I sat down on the nearest chair.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Here—you're looking faint!"

"I'm not! But—oh, Sandy!—oh, confound Nadine! What did she ever get me into this mess for?"

I expected him to tell me not to swear, but instead he drew up a chair and sat down beside me. "Don't forget I'm the doctor, old girl," said he. "You're keeping something back. Out with it!"

I told him about the blue mark on my blotter the night we saw the duppy. He was serious enough. "Is there anything else?" he asked.

"No—I've told you everything, now. And it's quite enough, isn't it? Those two blue obi-signs—and the blue thing that walked—two feet above the floor! We saw it, Sandy! We both saw it, I tell you! Mr. Heath said—"

"Damn Mr. Heath!"

"But he said that the obi-sign, and a—a bottle with a nail and a beetle in it—oh, it's absurd, I know!—but he said they meant disaster! And we saw the—the duppy, Sandy! After the first sign, you know! And now—"

"Oh, rot! You don't honestly believe that my finding this blue wiggle on my bureau means anything, Susan! You can't!"

"I know I can't! But—"

"Now look here, old lady! You are not to talk about it any more, nor think about it, either! I don't believe in this obeah business, but I do know there is something going on that we don't understand. And before I'm through with it—"

"If it wasn't for the Kerr-Coopers I'd turn the rest of you out and take

Billy away to the seashore or something. As it is, I shall just have to stick it through until they go. But—it gets you, Sandy, it gets you!"

"No, it doesn't, Susan. It is not going to. You are not going to let a crazy thing like this get you, after all you put through in France without going under. Pull yourself together! This is probably the end of it all, anyway! Somebody has been playing jokes, and damned poor ones. That's the only explanation of it. They're bound to get tired of it some time!"

I was feeling better. "I hope you are right," I said. "I'm ashamed of having been such a goose—"

"You don't have to call yourself names! Our instincts are queer things; there is still something of the primitive superstitions buried deep in all of us, I suppose. They jump out at us sometimes, catch us off guard, that's all."

"Well, I—I'm glad you are here, Sandy," I said.

"Thanks," he replied; and he walked with me into the house. Aunt Essie was sound asleep, her head rolled over on one shoulder; I knew she'd complain of a crick in her neck and say she had taken cold, later on. Julian and Billy were playing bear on the library floor; I went up to my room. As I went in I remembered Nadine's pendant; I had left it so carelessly on the desk—I was as bad as my sister! But the little velvet box was where I had laid it—though it came to me that I had left it open, and now it was closed. I took it up, pressed the spring of the lid. . . .

Sandy had spoken truly when he said that there is something of the primitive left in all of us; ancient terrors do rise upon us unawares out of the darkness of the ages. I held that velvet box in my hand—and my spine felt cold; I know my lips and fingertips were cold. I know I felt as though the world were full of horrible dim demons grinning at me, leering and clutching at me. For there was no diamond pendant, no diamond-studded chain in that box. The jewels were gone, and on their satin bed there lay a smooth little

seashore pebble with bluish markings through it . . . !

CHAPTER V

I DON'T know how I got downstairs. Billy was leaning against Aunt Essie's chair, begging her to go with him to see the puppies; Julian and Sandy were still in the library, smoking. They both jumped up when they saw my face; Julian quickly closed the door behind me, and I think Sandy caught me as I was tottering and put me into a chair. I know that a few minutes later he was holding something to my lips, and Julian was rubbing my wrists. When I looked up at Sandy there was an expression on his face that I had never seen before.

As well as I could I explained what had happened. "But Billy and I were right here all the time!" said Julian, when I had finished. Then something seemed to come to him; he stood up, flushing. "I give you my word I was not in your room, Susan," said he. "I am not that much of a cad."

"I believe you, old man!" said Sandy, and I knew they both saw that I did, too. We looked from one to the other. Aunt Essie—the three guests who were out walking—a six-year-old baby who couldn't very well be a thief—all the servants out driving—Julian, Sandy, and me. . . . Everybody about the place accounted for; and there lay the pebble in the velvet box, and the diamonds were gone. Dr. Cameron walked to the window and back, beating a closed fist against the palm of his other hand.

"It's a damned poor joke," he announced.

"You've said it," agreed Julian. "But the thing simply must be in the house! Do you feel up to helping us search, Susan?"

They would have had a hard time leaving me behind! We looked everywhere. My room was fairly turned inside out; every corner of the hall and stairs was gone over, every inch of the way out to the terrace where I had

talked with Sandy, even every other room in the house. Aunt Essie had apparently yielded to Billy's persuasions to pay the puppies a visit; the Kerr-Coopers and Mr. Heath returned while we were giving a final search to the stairs.

"What's up?" asked Mr. Heath, cheerfully.

"Oh, I've mislaid a little piece of jewelry—nothing to worry over," said I. "I'm sure we'll find it somewhere."

Well, we got through the evening as well as could be expected. Mr. Heath could always be counted upon to keep the conversation going, and this time Sandy showed himself perfectly well able to do his part. Julian looked a little worried, but I don't think anyone but myself noticed it, though I saw Aunt Essie looking at him and at me every now and then; but she asked no questions.

She came into my room after we had locked up for the night and asked what on earth had happened to it; when I did not reply she said:

"There's something going on in this house. There's something going to happen."

"Oh, Aunt Essie, dear, please—please—" I began; but she went on:

"What I want to know is, what's that girl Estelle setting up to the driver for? They been out together all evenin', and Dossy's crying her eyes out all over the kitchen table. It's my opinion they're hatching something."

She walked out of the room without giving me a chance to say anything, which was just as well. I had enough on my hands without having worries about the servants thrust upon me. I told myself that flesh and blood could only endure just so much and no more; and I thought I had reached the limit. Much I knew about it!

But I was thankful enough that the next day was quiet. Not a single thing happened that was out of the ordinary. I got a few minutes alone with Julian and Sandy; I imagine none of us forgot the affair of the diamond pendant for very long, but we all agreed it

was out of the question to bring detectives out to the place in Bill's absence. We had our obligations to Bill's guests; we all felt sure that we must somehow, somewhere, find the diamonds; such things could not possibly have vanished into thin air. The one possibility remaining was that a burglar might have secreted himself somewhere in the house.

"But if he did," said Julian, "he went up the chimney. Because I'm ready to swear that every corner of this house was searched before he could have made his getaway."

Sandy and I agreed to that; and, besides, there was the pebble streaked with blue. It would have been a highly imaginative burglar who could have inflicted that and all the other Obeah stuff upon us. At any rate, we all three thought it could do no harm to wait a few days in the hope that the pendant might be found; perhaps by that time the Kerr-Coopers would have departed, too, which would simplify things.

I confess that I felt uneasy when Mrs. Kerr-Cooper came down to dinner that evening arrayed in her jewelry again. She had on a wonderful collar of blue moonstones set in platinum with seed pearls; it was the sort of thing you could imagine a mermaid's wearing, and Mrs. Kerr-Cooper was not especially becoming to it, though I could not blame her for having acquired it when she suddenly became possessed of the power of buying whatever she wanted. I'd wear a thing like that, myself, if I looked like fury in it; any woman would. . . .

On Tuesday everybody except Aunt Essie and Billy went for a long tramp, carrying luncheon; Aunt Essie said she never went on a picnic except on the Fourth of July, and not then if she could get anybody else to look after her Sunday-school class, and the walk would be too long for the little boy. We got home so tired and so late that we all decided not to dress for dinner; and in the evening nobody felt like playing cards, but instead we all amused ourselves as we happened to

want to. Mr. Kerr-Cooper went outside with his cigar; the other men were swapping stories in the library—for Sandy seemed to have warmed somewhat toward Mr. Heath, or else (I wondered a little!) was pursuing a policy of keeping him under observation. Aunt Essie was having the time of her life showing Mrs. Kerr-Cooper how to knit squares for a bedspread, when suddenly Mr. Kerr-Cooper burst into the room.

"Oh, I say!" he exclaimed, "I've seen a duppy!"

Mrs. Kerr-Cooper smiled, and said, "How int'rstin'! Fancy!"

But the men came out into the hall, and Aunt Essie closed her eyes. "I've seen a duppy, you know!" Mr. Kerr-Cooper repeated, beaming around on us all. "Fact! Out there at the edge of the woods! Rather tall, you know, and slender; blue, and—by George!—it walked some two feet above the ground!"

"How extr'ord'n'ry!" said his wife, looking quite alert; but Julian and Sandy waited for nothing. They dashed out of the room as though seven devils were after them, and of course Mr. Heath and Mr. Kerr-Cooper followed.

"There's no such things as ghosts!" Aunt Essie croaked. "It's all nonsense! There's no such a thing as a— a duppy!"

But Mrs. Kerr-Cooper and I went out to the terrace to see what the men were doing, and I noticed that Aunt Essie was not far behind. But there was nothing to be seen; we went back into the house, and after a while the men returned, laughing and making fun of Mr. Kerr-Cooper, who stoutly persisted in his story. Only Julian was quiet; I thought he was worried, and I knew that I was.

I fully expected another visitation of some sort during the night, but none came; it was not until breakfast time that we discovered anything wrong. Everybody seemed to have slept late that morning; Julian was not down, and it was not until we were through

with our fruit that Mr. Kerr-Cooper came into the room alone. I saw at once that something had happened to disturb him; I had the queerest feeling somewhere inside me, and Sandy gave me a quick glance.

"Is Mr. Remsen here?" Mr. Kerr-Cooper asked. When someone said that Julian was not down yet, he turned to me. "Then I think I shall have to tell you, Miss Atwater, because no time should be lost. I am very sorry to say that most of my wife's jewels have disappeared between the time she put them away, night before last, and this morning."

Did the world swim around me? Emphatically, it did.

For a moment we sat stunned; then everybody began to ask questions all at once and all together. We finally found out that Mrs. Kerr-Cooper had put away her jewels as usual on Monday evening; she kept the boxes in a dressing-bag under her bed. This morning—Wednesday—she had wanted a pin to go with the gown she had put on, and had opened the bag. The boxes were all there; but the first one she opened, which should have contained the smaller articles, was quite empty—except for a smooth round pebble with bluish markings on it. A hurried search revealed that part of the contents of the other boxes were also gone, part still in their places. She had lost a crescent set with large diamonds, another of sapphires and pearls, half a dozen rings, a bracelet, and the moon-stone collar.

"This is not an affair for Miss Atwater," said Dr. Cameron, when we fully understood what had happened. "Mr. Julian Remsen is here in his brother's place. I will call him down at once."

It is safe to say that nobody ate anything while Sandy was gone; Adossa came into the room, but I nodded to her to go out. We heard Sandy come running downstairs, but instead of coming into the dining-room he went out of doors. I excused myself and followed him, though I had to run to catch up

with him. In fact, I was just in time to hear the chauffeur George say:

"No, sir, I have not seen him this morning, sir. But the small car is gone, sir. I think Mr. Julian must have taken it."

I looked at Sandy, and Sandy looked at me. I knew the same grotesque thought went through both our minds. Julian was gone. Julian . . .

CHAPTER VI

THERE is one thing to be said about English people: they can be counted on for calmness under unusual circumstances. I had been thinking of Mrs. Kerr-Cooper as a rather spineless person; as I walked back from the garage with Sandy Cameron I had visions of her going into hysterics over the loss of her jewels, and raising no end of a rumpus. I wondered how on earth I was going to face the situation ahead of us; but Sandy struck the right note at once. All the guests were in the dining-room when we arrived, and Dr. Cameron explained that Mr. Julian Remsen had been obliged to go to the city for a day, and suggested our saying as little as possible about the loss of the jewels until we had decided upon what course to pursue. The servants, he said, had better not suspect that the loss had occurred—or been discovered, if perchance one of them was guilty. Mrs. Kerr-Cooper put her hand over mine, and said:

"This is a very trying situation for you, my dear! I know how you must feel—with your sister away, too!"

"Yes, yes," her husband agreed.

"I told you something was going to happen in this house," said Aunt Essie, "but nobody pays any 'tention to me!"

She was the only one who refused to go out on the terrace after breakfast; the rest of us took our chairs as far as possible from the house, because we had to hold our council of war out of hearing of the servants. Mr. Kerr-Cooper was the only man who succeeded in looking at all cheerful.

"By George, Heath," said he, "d'you

know, I think there's some truth in those yarns of yours about Obeah—duppies, and all that! I saw the duppy last night—this morning my wife's jewels are gone! Funny thing, that! Now I suppose that if I had come face to face with the duppy it would have been me that was missing, instead of my wife's jewels—what?"

"Fancy!" his wife said, trying to smile; but Mr. Heath was obviously distressed.

"I wish I had never said a word about Obeah and duppies!" said he. "I have a guilty feeling every time that poor girl passes me the bread! And now—"

"Oh, I say! I was joking, old man! Of course there's no truth in it!" said Kerr-Cooper; and yet I could not help feeling that even as he protested he had the air of a man denying what he believes to be true in order to spare somebody's feelings.

Sandy had been biting his lip; now he flicked the ash from his cigar. "I'm not so sure of that!" said he. I jumped, and gave him a warning look; but evidently he had made up his mind to tell the whole thing. That is precisely what he did, and it lost nothing in the telling; he had every appearance of accepting the weird occurrences at their face value, too, of actually believing in them. "As a matter of fact," he added, "we none of us know anything about this Obeah stuff. There may be more in it than we of our state of civilization are willing to admit. I don't know how the rest of you feel about it."

"I should rather like to see one of those blue obi-signs," said Mr. Kerr-Cooper; Sandy took a bit of crumpled paper out of his pocket, and a little rounded pebble which he gave to Mr. Heath.

"That's the stone that was left in place of the pendant. What do you make of it, Heath? And there's the obi-sign that was wished on me."

Mr. Heath turned the little stone over and over. "A seashore pebble," said he. "And we are a hundred and

thirty miles from the sea, as the crow flies."

"Just like the one in my wife's jewel-box!" exclaimed Mr. Kerr-Cooper. "And this is undoubtedly meant to represent a thing like your charm, Heath!"

A little muscle in Mr. Heath's cheek was twitching; Mrs. Kerr-Cooper was quite pale. "It's a rum go," said Sandy.

I felt as though I were being smothered. "There is only one thing to be done," said I. "I am going straight into the house and telephone to town for a detective. Tell me the name of an agency, somebody!"

"Don't you think it would be wise to wait until Julian gets back, Miss Atwater?" Mr. Heath asked. "After all, he is the one—"

"It's not your affair, my dear Susan," said Sandy.

"But it just is my affair," I returned. "I am here in my sister's place; little Billy and the house were put into my hands. I am going to—get—a—detective! Right off!"

Sandy was looking at me with his eyes squinted up; I am sorry to say that he even winked at me ever so slightly. But it was Mr. Kerr-Cooper who spoke; oh, he was a good sport, all right!

"My dear Miss Atwater," said he, "if I may be allowed to suggest! After all, it will be easy enough to keep the thief on the place, provided we commandeer the car. Then, if we miss any of the servants, it will be easy enough to head him off—or her. And if this Obeah business has anything to do with the loss of the jewels, I rather fancy we can get to the bottom of that as well as a detective—what? I'm game to try, anyway! What do the rest of you say? I don't altogether like the idea of having one of those paid fellows in while Mr. Remsen is away, upon my word I don't!"

"I'm with you!" said Mr. Heath; and Sandy Cameron added, "Me, too! I think you've got the right idea, Mr. Kerr-Cooper!"

"Good! What do you say, Miss Atwater?"

Well, what was there for me to say? I thought I knew perfectly well what the detective's first move would be; and, after all, Julian was Bill's own brother. It would be perfectly unspeakable to bring all that disgrace on poor old Bill while he was away, and if Julian really had the things and got away with them, I knew Bill well enough to be sure that he would make up the loss to the Kerr-Coopers.

"I will consent to wait for a day," I told them.

"Good!" Mr. Kerr-Cooper exclaimed, though his wife looked a little distressed—and I could not blame her, remembering what he had said about the way duppies behave when you meet them face to face, and of course remembering that wonderful moonstone collar and all. But Mr. Kerr-Cooper seemed to have things his way in his own family.

"Now what about the other servants on the place, Miss Atwater? How many are there that we shall have to look out for?" he asked, in a business-like way.

"Oh, there are only the ones you have seen, and old Henry," I told him. "We can count Henry out—he was my father's coachman, and he would defend anything of Nadine's or mine with his life. His house is about a mile down the road; he raises the vegetables for the place, and brings the milk. I think he does something with the gasoline engine, too—that's in the little brick house down by the brook. There aren't any other outside servants; Bill likes to keep the place wild, you know."

"Ah! That narrows the thing a bit, then! Now I suggest that you tell the chauffeur to leave the car in front of the house, as we may want it at any moment; then we can keep an eye on it. Some of us will go off for a drive after luncheon, to make the story good. The rest can remain here on guard-duty; we shall have to keep the servants under surveillance, without their suspecting it."

So it was agreed; but I insisted on having Mrs. Kerr-Cooper's remaining jewelry locked up, and as there was only one Yale lock in the house, they were finally put into the closet in Nadine's bedroom where Bill kept his small private stock. Nadine had been wise enough to leave the key in Aunt Essie's care, instead of in Julian's. I could not see any reason, under the circumstances, why a bottle of Bill's best rye should not be subtracted from the stock, either, before the door was locked and the key given back to Aunt Essie.

"Pity they didn't steal that poisonous stuff," said she. "I don't know what the world's coming to. And there's something worse going to happen in this house. I feel it."

But in spite of all our efforts, my small nephew was the only member of the household who seemed perfectly at his ease all that day; I was thankful when the Kerr-Coopers and Mr. Heath went off in the car early in the afternoon, so that at last I could have a talk alone with Sandy; it did seem strange for me to have come to the point of wanting to see him alone!

I suspected Aunt Essie of wanting to institute a search through the servants' rooms, and I did not care if she did it. I went out to the terrace with Sandy; the atmosphere of the house had become unendurable.

"Oh, Sandy," I said, "what do you make of it all?"

He was standing in front of me with his hands in his pockets. "Poor old girl!" he said, with a grin. "Why didn't you marry me sensibly in France? Then you'd have escaped all this mess!"

I was in no mood for that sort of speech. "Now look here, Sandy Cameron!" I flared. "I distinctly told you that domestic life did not appeal to me! And this, let me remind you, this—is domesticity!"

He laughed. "Is it? Oh, all right! It's just not my idea of it, but have it your own way, my dear Susan! I won't bother you!"

I felt the tears in my eyes; suddenly I did feel so dreadfully alone. "What does it all mean, Sandy? You don't really believe there can be any truth in this Obeah stuff, do you? And—Julian—"

He walked away, then came back. "If you mean that a duppy is a—a duppy, no, I don't! But those blue wiggles, the pebbles, that bottle Adossa found, the theft of the jewels—well, the whole thing hangs together, that's all!"

I felt as though my ears were deceiving me. "You don't mean that you believe—" I began; but he laughed.

"I mean that somebody's up to tricks, that's what!" he cried. "And if it's what I think it is, the whole thing will stop, now that the rest of the jewels are under lock and key. Or else we'll find that closet broken into. The only puzzling thing, really, is why the thief did not take all the jewels while he was about it."

"But Julian—"

"Yes, I know! That looks queer. But Julian is not as bad as people think he is, Susan, and we do know something about him. We know he's a Remsen, Bill's brother. Now I ask you—would any man be such a fool as to skip with loot from his own brother's house, knowing suspicion would point his way? He would not! Julian will be home by dinner-time with a perfectly good excuse for having been away—that's my opinion."

"I—I hope you are right!"

"Why, of course I'm right, my dear girl! Don't let your imagination run away with you! Put it to work!"

"How?"

"Well—just for example—isn't there one person in this happy family about whom we none of us know anything whatever?"

"I don't see why you should accuse Mr. Heath," I said, when I had thought it over a minute. "You could see how ashamed and sorry he was this morning."

"I'm not accusing anybody. I'm not forming any opinions. But I am going

to keep my eyes open. And if anybody from this house decides to run up to town, I'm going to make the telephone wires hum, that's all. I'm not sure but I'll have an errand of my own at the same time."

"Oh, dear," I sighed, "I wish it were next week, or something! But if you're sure we are not going to have any more of this duppy business, that's some comfort, at least! It's all too—too grotesque! Just the mere word—duppy! Think of it, people like ourselves, and—duppy!"

Sandy laughed. "Yes, isn't it?" But I'm absolutely certain we have seen the last of duppies and their performances."

His assurance gave me new courage; I have often noticed that a laugh is a great tonic. I went indoors and had a good romp with Billy-boy, and when the motorists returned in good humor and we had all had dinner, I think I had no doubts left that everything was going to come out all right. While we were playing bridge the telephone rang from its little closet under the stairs; Sandy was dummy, and answered it, and I noticed that after the first words he closed the door of the closet. When he came out he explained that Julian had telephoned from town that he had not been able to finish his business, and might not get back for a day or two; but I knew from his expression that something was wrong. I asked him to help me close up the house, and when the others were out of the way I told him he might as well tell me the truth.

"It was not Julian," he said, grimly. "The station agent telephoned that the small car had been standing outside all day, and wanted to know what to do with it."

"Oh, Sandy!" I said; my knees felt weak.

"Cheer up, old lady!" said he; but I was not in an amiable mood.

"Why don't you add, 'The worst is yet to come!'" I snapped. I little knew!

I think it must have been about three o'clock in the morning when someone

knocked on my door. It was Mrs. Kerr-Cooper, who came into my room half dressed, with her dressing-gown on, and her eyes red from weeping.

"Oh, Miss Atwater, I do hate to get you up, but—I am so very anxious!"

"But what's the matter? What has happened?" I cried, drawing her into the room and closing the door.

She sat down on the side of the bed. "My—Charles—Mr. Kerr-Cooper—oh, I don't know—"

"Oh, please, please!" I besought her.

"Oh, Miss Atwater, he—he has not come back!"

"Back?"

"We sat chatting for a while, after we came up; then Charles said he was going down to smoke a cigar. And he has not come back!"

"But—but—it must be almost morning!"

She gave me a look and covered her poor face with her hands and began to cry again. I opened my door and flew down the hall to Sandy's. "Sandy! Sandy!" I whispered, though it seemed to me that my whisper echoed through the house. "Get dressed right away!"

He seemed to have heard me the moment I touched his door. "Coming!" said he; and I sped back. I know I never dressed so quickly in my life; and as for the way my hair looked, hanging down my back in a pigtail . . . I was ready by the time his door opened; I beckoned him into the room. In a moment he had heard what had happened.

I think I had better not put down the two short words he said; Mrs. Kerr-Cooper promptly fainted.

CHAPTER VII

SANDY lifted her feet to the bed, felt her pulse, rolled back her eyelids; then he snapped out:

"Only fainted. You can attend to her. And—you stay here, do you hear? You—stay—here!"

I heard him knock at Mr. Heath's door, and in a very few minutes they went downstairs together. When I

heard them on the terrace a little later, I threw my pocket flashlight out of the window, and saw it land at Sandy's feet. He waved a hand as he picked it up, and he and Mr. Heath went around the corner of the house. I saw that it was raining.

I really do not know how I got through the next hour; when Mrs. Kerr-Cooper felt better I helped her dress. Not long after we got downstairs, the men were back. And—there were only two of them.

"Is h'anything wrong, meestress?" Rose asked me, when she came down after a while and found me making coffee. I promptly lied, and as promptly made up my mind to keep the servants under my eyes that day. Aunt Essie asked the same question when she came down while we were all drinking the coffee, and for a moment no one answered. Then Sandy said, with a noble effort at cheerfulness:

"We all got up to see the sunrise, Miss Essie—that's all!"

But he did not know the grim little old lady who stood on the lowest stair looking at us. "Sunrise! It's pouring cats and dogs!" Then she looked at Mrs. Kerr-Cooper. "Where's your husband? You been crying!"

I saw that we might as well tell her the truth as endure her questions. "Mr. Kerr-Cooper went out for a walk, Aunt Essie," I began.

"I know he did. I saw him," said she.

We all gasped. "You—saw—him?"

"Yes, I did! What's queer about that? I got up to shut my winder, and he was walking outside with a cigar. 'Twas unly drizzlin' then, but if he's still walkin' in all this downpour he'll want more'n a cup o' coffee when he gets back. I'd give him pepper tea, if he was mine."

Mrs. Kerr-Cooper bowed her head and began to tremble; suddenly Aunt Essie sat down. She opened her mouth once or twice, and looked from one serious face to another. "Do you mean to say he hasn't come back?" she demanded of the assembled company;

and nobody answered. I think, somehow, we all felt like culprits. "Why—why, he was just out there on the grass . . . and that was—that was last night! And—my sakes alive! Don't you know where the man is?"

"Oh, Aunt Essie! Please, please don't say another word!" I begged her, in an undertone.

"What's the matter with you, Susan? You talk as if somebody's dead!"

Mr. Heath got up and walked to the fireplace; Sandy shook his head at Aunt Essie, and nodded toward poor Mrs. Kerr-Cooper. My aunt's mouth fell open, then shut with a snap. But only for an instant.

"This," said Aunt Essie, "this—is murrnder!"

I put my arms about poor Mrs. Kerr-Cooper, who covered her face again, and shivered. Mr. Heath looked at Aunt Essie with his lips drawn back from his teeth, but Sandy spoke up with highly satisfactory emphasis. "Nothing of the sort, Miss Atwater!" said he. "Mr. Kerr-Cooper is perfectly well able to take care of himself, wherever he is! I think we can trust Mr. Kerr-Cooper to attend to his own business, and that's a pretty good example for everybody to follow!"

"You keep a civil tongue in your head, young man!" cried Aunt Essie; but I threw Sandy a grateful glance, and Mrs. Kerr-Cooper seemed to draw courage from his words. She looked up.

"He is very fond of tramping," she said, timidly.

And Sandy repeated, though his tone was still angry, "Yes, of course he is fond of tramping! Why shouldn't a man go for a walk, if he wants to! He'll be back in time for breakfast, and he'll have it on us for all this—er—this—"

But he was not; and it was very little breakfast any of us ate. As soon as we left the dining-room, Sandy insisted that Mrs. Kerr-Cooper should go to her room and lie down; she protested, but yielded to Sandy's professional manner. The two men, needless to say, had

searched through the house and the nearer grounds, earlier in the morning; but they immediately set forth again, this time taking the chauffeur with them, and, as I afterward found out, even enlisting the services of old Henry when he appeared with the milk. I gave the three maids enough work to keep them thoroughly well occupied all day; I even told Rose to make a layer cake and frost it elaborately, and told Estelle to finish all the mending in the house, and Adossa to wash all the white paint on the upper floor. Aunt Essie promised to look after Billy, and to see that none of the maids left the house or got to the telephone. Then I went down to the garage and got out the big car.

I met Mr. Heath on the highroad, and together we scoured every road and by-path within ten miles of the Lodge, regardless of the drenching rain and all the puddles. Of every person we met, Mr. Heath asked what questions he could without displaying anxiety; and the man at the railroad station was quite sure that nobody answering Mr. Kerr-Cooper's description had got on any train.

I think we were both sick with disappointment when we got home and found that the other searchers had been no more successful than ourselves. It was long past luncheon time, and Aunt Essie had told Adossa to leave the food on the table and get on with her work. Rose's big frosted cake was a masterpiece, and I saw my small nephew eyeing it longingly as he drifted around the table—for of course Aunt Essie had seen to it that he had his noonday dinner as usual. None of us had much appetite, and poor Mrs. Kerr-Cooper made a heroic effort at eating which did not get her very far. At last I decided to cut the cake, and Billy came to my elbow and began to dance up and down, his eyes shining. I gave him the first slice, and as he bit into it his eyes opened rounder than ever, and in a moment he took something out of his mouth.

"It's a birfday cake!" he cried, and

licked at the thing he had taken out of his mouth, licked it like a hungry puppy-dog, then held it up for us to see.

It was an emerald and diamond ring. Mrs. Kerr-Cooper drew a sharp breath. . . .

Now that I look back at it all, I am glad I was the first one to come to my senses. I took the ring, and gave Billy-boy another slice of cake. "There! A piece in each hand! Now run out to the kitchen so you won't get crumbs in here!"

"But it's a birthday cake, Auntie! I want to stay for the party!" the little chap protested.

But my nerves would not stand another thing. "Go! At once!" I commanded; and as that young man had heard such a tone very seldom in his little life, he went.

"I never did trust those Blacks!" said Aunt Essie. "Now you see what comes of hirin' people that can't even talk like folks!"

I went to the pantry door and called Rose. I held up the ring. "Rose," I asked, "how did this get into the layer-cake?"

She looked from the ring to my face; I don't believe anyone could have doubted her genuine amazement. "Me never did see hit before, meestress!" said she. "Dere is not h'anything in me cake but h'eggs and milk and sugar and—"

"This ring was in the cake. How did it get there? Tell the truth, Rose—nobody's going to hurt you!"

"Me never did see hit before, meestress!"

"Who was in the kitchen while you were making the cake?"

"Not h'anybody, meestress."

"Were you out of the kitchen?"

"Just for one minute when H'Adossa h'asked me to help her wid de step-ladder, meestress."

"There's no such things as duppies," said Aunt Essie; and straightway Rose gave her a look of terror and rushed out of the room.

"Oh, for goodness' sake, Aunt

Essie!" I began; but it would have taken more than that to quiet her.

"First it's thievin', and then it's duppies, and then it's murder!" she ripped out. "There's no such things as duppies!"

There was a wail from poor Mrs. Kerr-Cooper. "Oh, I have had that in my mind all day! He said—he said that if you looked a duppy in the face, you—you— And now he's gone! We've been married nineteen years, and now he's—gone!"

Well, of course the poor lady had hysterics, and of course Sandy and I had all we could do to get her quiet again. I was thankful enough to have a doctor at hand, and fortunately he had a little medicine case with him; but it was not until after the second hypodermic that he declared it would be safe to leave her. He said she would certainly sleep for some hours after that dose, and we should be more useful elsewhere.

"What, what do you make of it all?" I asked, when at last we were downstairs again.

"I know what I make of it," said Mr. Heath. "The thief is in this house, and the sooner we search the servants, the better."

Sandy gave him a very direct look. "I think you are quite right about the thief's being in this house," he said. "But I don't see that searching the servants is going to help us find Kerr-Cooper."

"Then—now, right this minute, I am going to telephone for a detective! If you had let me do it when I wanted to—"

"Wait a minute, Susan!" said Sandy, getting between me and the telephone closet. "This is not an affair for detectives—"

"How can you say that?" I cried, indignantly. "How can you say that, when poor Mr. Kerr-Cooper may be—"

"Wait, I tell you! We don't want any scandal here now, any more than we did before! One of the jewels has been returned, and I think you'll find that the others will be. I also think

you'll find that when the jewels get back, Kerr-Cooper will turn up safe and sound, also."

"What on earth are you driving at, Cameron?" Mr. Heath asked; and I thought, myself, that Sandy was crazy.

"Are you trying to make out the thief's got Mr. Kerr-Cooper locked up somewhere?" Aunt Essie demanded. "There's only one lock in the house, far's I know! Here's the key to that liquor—if it's me you're suspecting!"

"I am sure the key is safe with you, Miss Atwater," said Sandy, grinning.

Aunt Essie sniffed; evidently she was not going to be mollified so easily. "Next thing you'll be saying I took the jewelry, I s'pose! I look like a thief and a murderer, don't I?"

Mr. Heath was running his fingers across his lips to hide a smile, but Aunt Essie stood up, her knitting-bag falling to the floor and spilling its contents. Mr. Heath stooped to gather them up.

"I assure you, Miss Essie, I didn't dream of—" Sandy began; then he stopped. For Mr. Heath had picked up the bag, and as he did so something fell to the floor. He exclaimed, and we all looked. It was a pin, a crescent set with sapphires and pearls.

CHAPTER VIII

I HAVE never in my life seen anything that looked in the least like Aunt Essie's mouth at that moment.

Then Mr. Heath picked up a tangled mass of yarns, and embedded in the meshes was—the moonstone collar.

Sandy Cameron sat down, abruptly; he covered his face with his hands, and began to rock back and forth in what seemed to me like nothing but absolutely insane mirth. Aunt Essie's mouth shut, then opened, then shut again. She made the queerest sound, but not a word came; then she turned and marched off upstairs.

When we had all stopped laughing, I said, "Oh, Sandy, I'm getting hysterical! I can't stand another thing!"

"Upon my word," said Mr. Heath, "I feel pretty much that way, myself!"

S.S.—Mar.—3

If you'll excuse me, I think I'll go out for a smoke!"

When he had gone, Sandy looked up at me and patted the sofa at his side. "Poor little girl," he said, "come and sit down!"

"I can't!" I cried. "I can't stay in this house another minute!"

"All right! Come along, then!" he said; and when we were walking up and down the terrace he added, "Susan—I sent for a detective the first thing this morning!"

It was late afternoon by that time; the rain was over, and the sun setting clear behind the woods. There was a lovely light over the drenched world; it was just the moment of the day that I have always loved best. Suddenly peace seemed almost upon us. "A detective! Oh, Sandy, why didn't you say so? I have been frantic!"

"I know, old girl! But I didn't want the others to know."

"But why not? Surely we've all been worried enough!"

He scanned the windows of the house, the closed garage, the woods; there was no one in sight. "Because—because—look here, look, Susan!" He had his hand in his coat pocket, and as he spoke he held it so that I could see what was in it, though the coat shielded it. On his palm were a dozen or more little rounded pebbles with bluish veinings.

I gasped. "Sandy—"

"Hush! Don't look startled! Susan, when I came back to the house to telephone this morning, while the others were searching and you and Heath out in the car, I took the liberty of helping myself to Heath's raincoat—he had apparently taken mine by mistake. And I found these pebbles in the pocket."

"Duppy stones!"

"Oh, don't be foolish, child! Don't you see the game now?"

I thought for a moment. "Mr. Heath—!"

"Precisely!"

"Then you think—"

"Well, don't you? The whole thing

hangs together! It's the only explanation that fits the case!"

"It does not explain what has become of Mr. Kerr-Cooper!"

"No!—There you have me! I honestly don't see what he can have done with Kerr-Cooper! I have exhausted every theory that's come into my mind. I have tried to connect his going away with Julian's going away, wondered whether Julian really had interested somebody in one of his schemes, at last. But Kerr-Cooper is not the man to run up to town and leave his poor wife to go through the torment she has suffered today. There are no cliffs hereabouts, no large bodies of water, and we have searched every square yard of the woods. There is not a corner of the house or the garage that we haven't gone over; we've even been all over old Henry's place, and you and Heath went everywhere else. What's happened to Kerr-Cooper is beyond me; and I'm darned glad I got in touch with the detective agency early this morning."

"But the detective hasn't come!"

"How do you know that? I rather think he's on the job at this moment, though we have not seen a sign of him. That's the way a good detective would go to work, it seems to me—not give himself away until he found a clue."

Well, I certainly felt relieved; we went indoors. Aunt Essie would not come down to dinner, though she sent her plate down twice for more summer squash; Mrs. Kerr-Cooper was still resting quietly. I observed that Adossa was looking queer again, but I did not really wonder at it. It would have been perfectly impossible for the servants not to see that something was wrong. The rest of us got through dinner well enough; it was when I went upstairs to see to Billy, while the two men were waiting in the hall for the coffee-tray, that the lights went out. . . .

Billy was sound asleep, looking like a little cherub, with his arm thrown up across his pillow. I stood beside his bed looking down at him, when there was sudden darkness. It flashed

through my mind that the rain must have done something to the wires; then the lights went on again.

"You had better bring in some candles," I said to Adossa, when she brought in the coffee a few minutes later. "You never can tell about these country wires, you know, after a storm," I added, and the men took it all for granted as much as I did.

We were just finishing our coffee when they went out again; before Mr. Heath and Sandy had the candles going, again they came on. And then began the most fantastic thing that had happened, of all the wild things we had endured. The lights flashed up and down, shone brightly for an instant, went black, shone brightly again. Mr. Heath sprang to his feet.

"That's Morse signaling!" he cried, and Sandy exclaimed, "By Jove! It is!"

I was breathless. Mr. Heath began to say letters aloud. "A-G-K-O-Y-M-G-A—it doesn't make sense! F-O-M—"

Once more they shone steadily. "Hold hard, Susan! Don't shiver so! Here, take another cup of coffee!" said Sandy.

"J-G-Y-O-R-M-A—what the deuce!" And the lights were on again. "That is someone signaling, someone who does *not* use the Morse code!" cried Mr. Heath.

"But how can any human being signal on electric lights?" I cried. "Oh, I simply cannot stand another thing!"

Sandy rushed to the telephone; we waited expectantly until he came out. "No trouble reported anywhere else," said he.

Flash, flash, went the lights. "Somebody's tampering with the wires! Heath, what do you say?"

"Wait a minute!" This from Mr. Heath, who dashed upstairs to his room; but in half the minute he was down again, a small black revolver in his hand.

It seemed to me hours that they were outside, hours while they searched through the cellar. "Nothing wrong

down there!" said Sandy; and again they went outside. I covered my face with my hands, but I could feel the flashes as they came. And then—

Oh, I know it is unbelievable! But then a terrible, wild shriek rang out, a woman's shriek, from somewhere far outside. Rose came rushing in from the kitchen, threw herself on the floor at my feet, and clasped her arms about my knees. "Ho, meestress! Obi-man here! Ho, my lord!" she howled. I could not make her take her arms away.

"What's happened now?" came the voice of Aunt Essie over the stairs. "Who else is killed? What's the matter with the lights?"

I did not reply. I couldn't! She came down to the hall. "What's that woman hugging you for?" she demanded. But there was never an answer to that question.

"It's all right! Don't be frightened!" Sandy Cameron's voice sounded from one of the long windows, and then he and Mr. Heath came into the room, bringing what I certainly thought was a lifeless burden between them. At last I pushed Rose away, and she straightaway transferred her embraces to Aunt Essie.

"It's Adossa!" I cried, when I saw what it was that they carried over to the sofa. "Is she—is she—"

"No, she is not!" snapped Sandy. "Tell that woman to bring water!"

But Rose was perfectly useless; it was I who brought the water, and a little later it was Aunt Essie and myself who got the poor girl into her bed, after Mr. Heath and Dr. Cameron had carried her up to her room, the lights still making their awful dance at intervals.

When we got down again Mr. Heath was seated with his head in his hands, and Sandy was slowly swearing.

"One's murdered, one's dying, and one's drugged," said Aunt Essie. "There's something going to happen in this house!"

She said it to Sandy Cameron, but he paid no attention to her. "Susan, the big car is gone," said he.

I could do no more than look at him. "Gone where?" Aunt Essie snapped. "Who'd go ridin' this time o' night?"

"And therefore George, the chauffeur, is gone," said Mr. Heath, looking up. "Shall I telephone, Cameron, or will you?"

"If you will," Sandy told him, nodding toward the closet under the stairs. We had all forgotten Rose; she was crouching in the shadows near the dining-room door, and now she spoke—or waited.

"Ho, my lord! Gone! He's gone! Ho, poor H'Adossa!"

Sandy turned on her. "Here! Get up out of that! What do you mean? What do you know about this?" he demanded.

The trembling woman got to her feet, her shadow dancing fantastically as the lights went out and came on again. "Me don't know nothing!" she muttered; but Sandy took her by the arm, and I venture to think there was something quite compelling in that grasp.

"Speak out!" said he. "What do you know?"

"Him's Obi-man, George! Him and Estelle did put spells h'on H'Adossa!"

Mr. Heath came out of the telephone closet. "What's that?" he cried. Sandy repeated what the woman had said.

"What—oh, what on earth does she mean?" I asked.

"This, I fancy!" said Sandy, and brought something out of his pocket. When Rose saw it she gave a wild howl and fled. It was the dried skin of a snake.

"We were almost at the garage when we heard the woman shriek," Sandy explained. "She must have fallen the second after. We found her lying on the floor with this thing in her hand. It was right where the big car usually stands."

I think it was a full minute before anyone spoke. Then Aunt Essie sat down, and her breath went out in a sort of whistle. Yet she was the first to recover speech. "There's no such—a thing—as a—duppy," she chattered.

The rest of us looked at each other. "You—you said a—a duppy—sheds his—skin—" I faltered, looking at Mr. Heath.

He threw up his hands. "I wish to God I'd never said a word!" he cried.

CHAPTER IX

HONESTLY, I don't know what would have become of our sanity if we had not caught the sound of a motor just at that moment; then a familiar horn sounded, and Sandy and Mr. Heath rushed to the door. Aunt Essie and I grabbed each other.

"Well! We've got 'em!" cried a voice; and the voice was Julian's.

There seemed to be a crowd of people coming into the room; Sandy and Mr. Heath and Julian were talking all at once. Then I saw that Julian had the girl Estelle held firmly by the wrist, and that a strange man and the chauffeur George were handcuffed together.

"Hello, Susan! Hello, Aunt Essie!" Julian cried, cheerfully. "This is Mr. Clancy, of Pinkerton's. I was in Pinkerton's when you phoned down this morning, Cameron, and Mr. Clancy and I came up together. Sorry we couldn't get here sooner, but we had some scouring around to do in town, first—trying to get hold of this fellow's record."

"You—you were in Pinkerton's!" I cried.

"Sure!" said Julian. "You see, Cameron told me what he knew about George—or suspected; and I thought I'd better slip off to town and get his record. Didn't make much headway at it, but Mr. Clancy here had no trouble in finding out what we wanted to know. And, by jingoes, we got to the station here just in time to keep him and this girl from skipping."

Estelle tossed her head. "It wasn't your business!" said she, pertly.

"Oh, wasn't it? Going to tell us what you've done with the jewelry?"

"I don't know what you're talking about!" she cried; but the detective spoke up. "If you'll just let me have

these two to myself for a few minutes, Mr. Remsen," said he, "I think I can make them see the light."

"Take them out to the kitchen," Julian told him, and showed the way through the dining-room. Just as he came back the lights began to flicker again. "What's the bright idea?" he asked, squinting up at them.

"Oh, Julian, dreadful things have happened since you've been gone!" I cried; I had suddenly remembered poor Mr. Kerr-Cooper, whom I had utterly forgotten in the excitement of the new arrivals. It did not take us long to tell the whole story.

Julian looked dazed. "Kerr-Cooper vanished, some of the jewels returned, a snakeskin—oh, I say!"

"Yes, I know!" said Sandy Cameron. "But there you are! Your coming home with the two runaways has punctured the last of my theories! I'm done!"

"Except one!" said Mr. Heath. "It's a theory I hate to admit, but these people are Jamaicans, and there is no doubt whatever that dark practices—"

"There's no such a thing as a duppy!" Aunt Essie remarked; but her voice faltered, and nobody paid the least attention to what she said.

Again the lights went out, came on, in flashes long and short. The three men stared up at them, and Mr. Heath said, "It's signaling—it might be Morse code—but it doesn't make sense! J-U-H-M—"

Julian sprang to his feet. "Signaling! By the lord Harry!" And he rushed out of the front door! After a moment of amazement, the other men went after him.

Aunt Essie and I just sat looking at each other. Her lips shut tight, then opened. "It's a mad-house! A lunatic asylum!" said she. "I dunno what I ever come away from Dorset for. A body ought to have sense enough to know when they're well off!"

I went to a window. The moon was shining, the world looked so beautiful, so serene! It could not have been more than ten minutes before I heard

voices—excited voices, men talking aloud and laughing. Then they came—and Mr. Kerr-Cooper was with them.

He shook me by the hand—I could have kissed him. He shook Aunt Essie's hand, and she was laughing a little hysterically.

"Where's my wife?" he cried, looking around the room.

His voice must have roused her. She came down the stairs in her bath robe.

"Oh, Charles!" she cried; and in a moment he was patting her back, patting her hair, laughing and saying over and over, as she wept in his arms, "There, there, old girl! There, there!"

They say that Englishmen are cold, and those two people had been married nineteen years. . . . But—oh, well! I know there were tears in my eyes; when I glanced at Sandy Cameron his eyes were wet, too. When he came up and took my hand in his I did not draw it away, either.

"Now that—that—is my idea of domesticity, Susan!" he whispered.

I looked at him; I think he understood from that moment. I know that, for myself, I saw the truth at last; all the bothers and all the petty annoyances and all the—well, the horrid masculine tyranny that might come from being married mattered just nothing at all. What really counted was that a man and a woman should be able to live together for nineteen years, and still feel as those two dear people did who stood there patting each other and at last trying to subdue themselves into their habitual calm. I smiled at Sandy—though I know my lips were trembling.

"All right, old girl!" he said, and walked away; I'm not a bit ashamed to confess that I wished we were alone.

Presently Mr. Kerr-Cooper remarked, "By George, I'm about starved, you know! I began to think you people would never get on to my telegraphing! Did it rather well, didn't it?"

Aunt Essie and I emptied the ice-box in short order, and Aunt Essie broke all records by handing Julian a

key. "Here!" she said. "There ain't much left in the other bottle!"

"But, Charles—where have you been?" Mrs. Kerr-Cooper asked, after a while; we were all seated around the dining-room table, and everybody laughed, even Mr. Kerr-Cooper himself.

"I have been in that little brick house down by the brook, my dear! And, my word! I began to think I should never be anywhere else! The place began to feel like a mausoleum, you know, or some such thing! The duppy's grave, what?"

"What I can't make out is why on earth you people did not go down to the lighting-plant when you were searching for Kerr-Cooper," said Julian.

"I did," said Sandy, looking very crest-fallen. "But I saw the door was padlocked, and I never thought of investigating it further. It didn't seem reasonable to suppose that a man could be on the other side of a locked door—and I was rather in a hurry to get on with the search."

"And I did not know that Remsen had a private lighting system on the place," said Mr. Heath, "though why it didn't occur to me when the signaling began, I don't know! Just shows how you can let a preconceived idea run away with you!"

"Oh, well, I shouldn't give it another thought, my dear chaps," said Mr. Kerr-Cooper. "The fact is, after I found I was locked in, I just settled down and had a nap. Hadn't a doubt you'd guess where I was. When I woke up I discovered what the place really was—great people, you Americans! Fancy having a little affair like that for lighting your place, off in the country as this is! Upon my word, it was int'r'stin', most int'r'stin', to watch that gas-engine at work. It was not until after dark when I began to be rather hungry, that I had the idea of signaling. Ticklish work, finding those wires! Did it rather well, what?"

"But how did you ever get shut in

there?" I asked. "Somebody said the door was padlocked."

"Ah—that! But the door was not padlocked when I got in, you know! Fact is, I got to thinking about that blue duppy-thing. Thought I'd have a look around, after the rest of you were in bed. Had rather a fancy to meet it face to face."

"You couldn't!" said Aunt Essie. "There's no such a thing as a—"

"Precisely!" said Mr. Kerr-Cooper. "Precisely, my dear lady! But at that time—my word! I wasn't so sure! I had my wife's jewels on my mind, you see, and I rather expected to find the jewels and the duppy together. I prowled about for a bit, then my cigar was gone, and I hadn't another, and there was a nasty drizzle. I was beginning to be rather fed up with duppy-hunting, you know, when I saw something moving down by the garage. I kept in the shadows, went on that way; and then my eye caught something coming out of the house. Even through the mist I could see that it was blue; and it moved some two feet above the ground."

Mrs. Kerr-Cooper exclaimed; her hand moved toward him along the table.

"Yes—quite two feet above the ground. I followed it; I think it heard me, for it stopped still once or twice as though listening. Then it started to run toward that engine-house."

"Oh—but what—" I began. Mr. Kerr-Cooper laughed.

"Nothing, I assure you, my dear Miss Atwater, but one of your servants. I distinctly saw that, as I got up with her a bit. A blue thing thrown over her head and shoulders—the black dress underneath—black against the shadows, you know—quite the effect of walking in midair!"

"Estelle!" cried Julian, and Aunt Essie exclaimed, "The hussy!"

"Ah—I rather think so," said the Englishman. "She knew the ground better than I did. She ran along the little brook down there, and I lost her; when I got to the little brick house and

found the door open, I'm afraid I rather foolishly took it for granted that she had gone inside. It was quite dark there; before my eyes had become accustomed to the blackness, the door slammed behind me, and I heard a padlock snap. Then a woman's laugh, and a man's voice said, 'Whip it!' Odd expression, what?"

"He probably said, 'Beat it!'" Julian suggested, and the rest of us smiled.

"Ah—but it's quite the same thing, isn't it? I'm rather afraid that your servants, Miss Atwater, have been using the engine-house as a—ah!—a *rendez-vous*!"

"Then where's the rest of the jewelry?" Aunt Essie demanded. "I haven't got it! And who put that ring in the cake?"

Mr. Kerr-Cooper looked his surprise. "Cake?" he repeated.

But Sandy stood up. "Look here, people! We've all been having a rather stiff time of it, and there hasn't been much sleep for any of us. I wish you'd let me prescribe for all hands! Why not postpone the rest of the talk until tomorrow?"

"Good idea!" said Julian. "I'll lock up, and have a word with Clancy. I daresay he won't refuse a drop of old Bill's best, and I think we'll find by morning that he'll have the truth of the whole affair out of those two."

CHAPTER X

How I did sleep that night! When I got down in the morning, Julian beckoned me out to the kitchen. Rose was standing at the range with her back to the room; but if there ever was a cook whose back does not express it when she's in a bad humor, I have yet to meet her. Mr. Clancy and George were standing up; the detective's face was red and angry, and the chauffeur looked frightened. Estelle was rocking back and forth, her heels tapping the floor and her expression just utter fury, while Adossa was crouched down in a chair by the table, quietly weeping.

Clancy looked at Julian. "These two

think they don't want to talk, Mr. Remsen," said he. "When does the first train go to town? We might as well be moving along. They'll sing another tune when they've been in the Tombs a few days."

The girl Adossa looked up with a cry, but Rose whirled around with a frying-pan in her hand, pointing it at Adossa. "You let him go!" she cried. "Me tell you—him's obi-man! You don't want nothing to do with him! You let him go!"

"Look here! What's Adossa got to do with this?" demanded Julian.

"H'Adossa, she George's wife! You h'ask him how-come he try to go h'off with Estelle, w'en he is H'Adossa's man! You h'ask him how-come he put Obeah h'on Adossa, him and Estelle!"

Suddenly something dawned upon me. I went up to Estelle. "Look at me!" I commanded. "And tell the truth, Estelle! The time's come when you've got to! Have you been putting those obi-tricks on Adossa? Answer me!"

But it was George who spoke, at last. He even shrugged and tried to smile, though it was not a highly successful effort. "She's easy, Adossa! Make her think me obi-man! Huh!"

"Scared to death because she found a bottle in the silver drawer! George and me—how we laughed over it!" said Estelle, sneering toward Adossa.

"Did you put that bottle there? Did you put that snake-skin in the garage?" Julian asked.

"I never set eyes on the old bottle till she come out with it in her hand," said Estelle.

"What about the other things—the snake-skin, the pebbles, the drawings of the obi-stone?"

"George, he put the snake-skin there. He said she'd think he had just gone off—like—like some funny thing, I don't know—" Then she jumped to her feet. "What you accusin' me of, anyway?" She cried. "I ain't done anything wrong! It ain't your business if me and George is in love with each other! He hadn't seen Adossa for five years,

until she come up here from the agency! You can't expect a gentleman to go on being in love with a lady he left five years ago! What business is it of yours?"

Clancy put a rough grasp on her arm. "Here! You mind your manners!" said he. "And you tell us what you did with the jewelry, you hear? Come now—out with it!"

"I don't know what you talking about! I ain't took anything!" she said, and began to cry.

Well, it's no use going into all the details. In the end we had the simple truth. Adossa was, indeed, George's wife, deserted in Jamaica years before; it must have been quite a jolly surprise to both of them when I happened to send her up from the agency. But she had immediately discovered his love-affair with Estelle; and that precious pair between them had done what they could to frighten her into relinquishing her claim on George. Nothing that Julian or the detective or I could say produced any information as to the rest of the mysteries; they stoutly maintained that they knew nothing of the pebbles, the blue drawings, the disappearance of the jewels.

It was to poor Adossa's credit that she pulled herself together enough to help me set the table; we were all at breakfast and trying to puzzle out the rest of the mystery when my small nephew came downstairs with a whoop and threw himself upon Julian.

"I fought you wasn't ever coming back!" he cried. Then he slipped out of Julian's arms. "Wait!" he said. "I got something for you! I saved it!"

He trotted out into the hall, and returned with a cigar-box held in both his chubby hands. "Here!" he said, giving it to Julian. "I saved 'em for you because I love you! Mummy says you always must give fings to people when you loves 'em."

Smiling indulgently, Julian opened the box. Then, with an exclamation, he poured its contents out upon the table. As nearly as I can remember, there were sixteen sea-shells; eleven

small, rounded pebbles with bluish veinings; two blue bottles with the labels soaked off, one being empty save for a waxed cork inside, the other containing a black-headed pin, a dead June bug and a tooth, four pieces of string, a broken fish-hook, a stub of blue crayon and a longer piece of brown, and—two rings, a diamond crescent pin, a bracelet, a slender gold chain set with diamonds, and one diamond pendant. . . .

"Spoofed!" sighed Mr. Kerr-Cooper.

Suddenly Mr. Heath put his head back and began to laugh; Julian and Mr. Kerr-Cooper joined in his mirth, but I couldn't, and Aunt Essie's lips were set in a tight, firm line. Sandy drew my nephew to his knees, and brought something out of his pocket.

"Look here, old man," said he, "are these pebbles yours, too? Did you give them to Mr. Heath?"

"To me!" Mr. Heath exclaimed, with a look of amazement.

Billy nodded. "Sure! 'Cause I didn't just want to give him a shiny, and—and I fought he might feel bad 'cause I wouldn't let him tell me stories. But my pebbles are pretty. I got 'em at Coney."

I could not resist it. "Children and cats—" I said to Aunt Essie.

"Fancy!" Mrs. Kerr-Cooper remarked.

Aunt Essie's face was a study in mixed emotions. "Billy-boy," I asked, "did you give anything to Aunt Essie, too?"

"Sure I did! I gave you one of my pebbles, too, Auntie, and I gave one to ve lady."

"And what about the birthday cake?"

His face fell. "But you wouldn't let it be a party, Auntie! And not anybody a-tall saw me when I put it in, and you wouldn't let it be a party!"

We all looked at each other. I wonder which of us felt the most utterly foolish. But Billy was fingering his two blue bottles. "If you don't mind, Uncle Julian," said he, "I guess maybe I'll just keep my bottles. I lost one of

'em. I put it away some place, and I lost it. It had somefing in it I wanted, too," he added, wistfully.

Aunt Essie leaned across the table, and shook her finger at him. "William, don't you know you're a bad, wicked boy to take things that don't belong to you?" she demanded. "Don't you know you hadn't any business touching those shinies, as you call 'em?"

Billy drew back against Sandy's shoulder, his lip quivering. "She said I could play wif' em! My mummy lets me play wif 'em! You wouldn't let me go on ve picnic! It's awful bad for little boys to be lonesome!"

Mrs. Kerr-Cooper reached across and drew the little chap to her own lap. "You may play with them again, Billy," said she. "And I think I can find you another blue bottle to take the place of the one you lost. Shall we go up to my room and see?"

Billy slipped off her lap and put his hand confidently in hers. "All right," said he. "But vere was somefing in that one I wanted."

Later in the morning, when we had talked it all over and admitted that we felt sufficiently foolish, and Estelle had gone up to town on the same train Mr. Clancy took—for George decided to remain and make it up with his wife—and when Sandy and I had spent an hour alone together very satisfactorily, Mr. Kerr-Cooper stood up and gave himself a little shake.

"Well," said he, "my wife and I had rather hoped to run across a little adventure of some sort. Think of our having found it in a quiet place like this!"

"Quiet!" Aunt Essie repeated; and the rest of us smiled. But Mr. Kerr-Cooper went on; I've often noticed that when a Britisher has anything to say he says it.

"All this obi-business, now! Instead of running into it in Jamaica, where it might be expected, we drop into it here in the States, where you're supposed to have got beyond that sort of thing!"

"I said all along there wasn't any

such things as duppies," said Aunt Essie, "But nobody'd listen to me! Nobody thought I knew anything!"

Mr. Kerr-Cooper made her a nice little stiffish bow. "Time has proved your wisdom, my dear lady!" said he. "But, just the same, now it's all over I don't mind confessing that I was jolly well frightened, once or twice!"

"You didn't have anything on me!" said Mr. Heath.

Mr. Kerr-Cooper was looking out of the window as though he saw something far off. "You know—" he spoke hesitatingly, as men speak of things that lie deep, "you know, in England we have a way of thinking that only a

gentleman is a good sport. Now I'm not a gentleman; my father was an iron-monger, and I made my money in the same trade. But after all, you know, all this business we've been through! And when a feller stands the gaff—well, what?"

He stopped, and looked embarrassed; I went and stood in front of him. "Mr. Kerr-Cooper," said I, "I don't care whether you made your money off pickled herrings! You're an out-and-out sport and a gentleman! Moreover, you're a—a darling!"

"Oh, I say!" said Mr. Kerr-Cooper, growing very red; but his wife got up and kissed me.



Sleeping Beauty

By Faith Baldwin

YOUR kiss most strangely stings my mouth,
It is a golden key,
Unlocking, to a hushed surprise,
The white, closed lids of spell-bound eyes,
And setting gesture free.

The wind blows silver from the South,
With warning on its wings,
It stirs that twisted, tangled mass
(Which none save you had dared to pass)
Of green and creeping things.

The world swings back to little tears
And little dreams shall fade,
A clatter from the court drifts out,
I hear the laughter and the shout
Of page and kitchen maid.

But I have slept a hundred years
In iv'ry silence wrapped,
And what I dreamed you'll never know,
As, bridal, at your side I go
Whom kissing life has trapped.



NEVER leave your spoon in your cup—work it up your sleeve.

"The Quality of Mercy Is Not Strained"

By Art Smith

THE last gleam of the early city sunset lingered in the musty court-room. It bid pathetic farewell as it moved slowly from the old oak desk, slid over the shiny bald head of the judge and slipped away at last behind the ragged brick skyline. The sudden hush in that "honorable branch of the municipal court" was not caused by the crack of the bailiff's gavel. Nor did it come of the sympathy felt for the sad parting of the day. There was a human urge, a presentiment that clutched the heart, a distress that rent the soul. For a little girl stood before the court.

Her great blue eyes shone quietly from a frame of golden hair. They seemed to plead—to ask only that the quality of mercy be not stinted—just a square deal, that's all. Her thin, tired little voice seemed like the lament of all suffering as it told the story of a mother and a mother's love—how the hard-working life could not provide—could not make both ends meet. And how, at last, the temptation of so many things—things that mother needed—had in a moment of weakness conquered, and she had yielded only to be detected and to earn the name of—shoplifter!

The great eyes were damp as the little girl drew her shabby coat up about her throat, and the delicate form winced as she coughed a dry, racking cough.

Eyes that were not too dimmed to see, had watched the hard face of the judge during the testimony. They had seen a slight twitch about the inflexible lips, then a decided one. Was he giving way? Had he a heart, after all—a heart that understood?

He appeared to set his judicial expression with a great effort. Reporters leaned close, with pencils poised, ready for a quick inscription to the gracious leniency of justice as incarnated in this great man. Old dames wiped their respective spectacles hurriedly and placed them upon curious noses in an ecstasy of suspense. Hardened officers of the law shifted their considerable feet and lowered their eyes.

The little girl had given her last trembling word. The testimony was over.

As though undermined by an influence usually foreign to them, the muscles of the judicial countenance suddenly relaxed. The stern demeanor of the court was gone, and in its place was an expression of humanity.

At last, as if he could stand it no longer, the judge bowed his head behind the old oak desk, deposited an hour's accumulation of tobacco juice in the brass cuspidor, resumed his former position and mien, and pronounced in an even, dignified tone, "Sixty days."



LAUGHTER is the sound you hear when you are chasing your hat.

Notes on Personalities

III—Rebecca West

By Miriam Teichner

This interview with Rebecca West is the third of SMART SET's current series on certain figures of the moment in the arts.

The series deals with the men and women who are coming into their own today in the various fields of æsthetic endeavor, and who are being talked about in the metropolis. It deals with the persons who are on the tip of greater achievement.

I

THE disconcerting youth of Rebecca West!

Are these lady novelists of the new day never to fit themselves snugly into the pigeon-hole of mental pictures where tradition has thrust and labeled them?

Lady novelist, indeed! Blue-stocking and high-brow! One fancies her in advance, dignity, height, severity, and a frosty air of withdrawal. The picture of one lady novelist obtrudes itself—parchment skin, a turmoil of greyish-yellow hair that reminds, inevitably, of scrambled eggs, stirred, whirlpool-wise, round and round, in a pan, China-blue eyes, serious, fishy, vaguely accusing. Humorless. Stevenson's "acidulous vestal" to the life. An interview with her made one suffer. . . .

Then Rebecca West answers the knock at the door of her hotel room, and—the incredible youth of her!

She says she's thirty. Very well, then, assume that she is. Few women have an object in adding to truth when it

comes to this frangible matter of age. But the slim small figure, the mass of crisp black hair swept straight back from the brow, the wide, luminous eyes, shaded with that excellent sweep of lashes, the small tip-tilted nose, the deeply-indented chin melting so purely into the fine, unblurred throat-line—they might belong to an adolescent. One feels something protective stirring in one's heart, and reaching out toward this girl—toward this astonishing, virile-minded, mellow-hearted child who, by some miracle of creative power, wrote "The Judge."

That miracle of creative power which fashioned "The Judge" and, earlier still, "The Return of the Soldier" is not all the endowment of Rebecca West. She has the critical gift as well as the creative. Before this girl was known as a novelist, she had already achieved no little fame as an essayist and critic.

It was in 1916 that she wrote her brilliant and incisive and delightful essay on Henry James, which was later published as one of the diminutive red books in the "Writers of the Day"

series. She was little more than a twenty-year-old girl when she wrote it, but it has full maturity of critical judgment.

This essay on Henry James is full of the spark of pure, delicious and leaping humor that is like the leaping of little friendly flames. Vivid imagery, the play of the creative imagination, is in every line of it. It is friendly and at times almost rhapsodic in its utterances, and yet the writer is not above poking a bit of fun at a literary figure which, it may be assumed, was, at that time, something of an idol to her.

Speaking of Henry James' attitude toward women, this flaming young feminist said: "James grimly expressed the opinion that the life of a woman is essentially an affair of private relations, and refused to dramatise in his imagination anything concerning women save their failures and successes as sexual beings, which is like judging a cutlet, not by the flavor, but by the condition of its pink paper frill."

Later, this acute and astute young feminist became a writer on the staff of the radically socialist "Clarion," of the "Daily News," and of the "New Statesman." Her work for "The New Republic" in this country brought her to the notice of observing Americans, too, as a critic and essayist whose pen glittered with power and glowed with beauty.

The young novelist-to-be did much experimenting before she settled upon writing as her metier. When she was seventeen, she ventured upon the stage. She admits that as an actress she was no brilliant success, and she was "fired" from one company upon which she had temporarily bestowed her talent because she was discovered reading text books on evolution during rehearsal.

As secretary to H. G. Wells, Miss West learned much that was to be of inestimable value to her in the writing craft. In London literary circles she became known as an intriguing and delightful companion, and her friends include most of the well-known English writers.

II

REBECCA WEST, rebellious and fiery-hearted youngster that she was—and is, despite her thirty years—is the child of a conservative father. Edinburgh Scot he was, stern, set, with never a doubt in all the world as to the kind of daughters a man was entitled to. The place of a man's girl-children was in the home. It was the whole duty of girl-children to be obedient, clever about their household tasks, and—beautiful.

In one respect at least, Rebecca bent herself to the will of her father. She became beautiful in a strange, sultry way, with those great questioning eyes, luminous and liquid, and that dusky red burning high on her cheek-bones.

"But," says Rebecca, "Father neglected to provide us the wherewithal with which to live the life of leisure in which he believed. We had jolly well all of us to make our own livings."

And so one sister became a teacher, and another a barrister, and, as though that weren't injury sufficient to heap upon a reactionary parent, a doctor as well, and Rebecca became a writer—the writer, as Grant Overton says, "of pungent and terrifyingly sane criticisms, novels of tender insight and intimate revelation."

If the father had lived, one pictures his discomfiture. It is somewhat as if one gave a clever child a littered floorful of blocks to play with, and said, "There, little girl, amuse yourself," and then, strangely and unaccountably, one found, on coming back from other tasks, that this disconcerting child had reared a Heaven-seeking cathedral of utter beauty, a cathedral of tall spires that sang upward into the sky, and flying buttresses of gay, tenuous strength, and high-arched doorways, carved with saints and all the good, glad things of out-of-doors; a cathedral of slim pillars that drew the eye and spirit up and up, like the living trunks of forest trees, a cathedral of golden lights shining steadfast down incensed, shadowy

vistas, with the rich stain of sunlight through colored glass spilled crimson and purple on grey stone, a cathedral where, over all, there pulsed a poignant stir of air, as of organ music just quivering to its close.

Yes, if the father had lived to watch the career of his youngest child—the sisters were eight and ten years older than Rebecca—he might well have felt that this sultry-beautiful daughter had wrought miracles of building with the material he had given her.

She scandalized her prim school—it was George Watson's Ladies' College—in its prim town of Edinburgh, by entering into a violent suffrage correspondence that was raging in the newspapers when she was fourteen. Her letter, hotly pro-suffrage, was printed, somewhat to her surprise, and—dear, dear, but that created a fuss! Nice girls—girls brought up in nice homes, facing on what she herself calls “the decent grey streets of Edinburgh,” girls brought up in the very shadow of “the black rock and bastions of the Castle”—didn't do such things. What could Rebecca have been thinking of?

What, indeed! Perhaps the teachers who were grieved, and the principals who were shocked, should have asked young Rebecca's mother and older sisters. For, whatever the father may have been—his name was Charles Fairfield of County Kerry—the mother was an artist, with something of the same hunger for beauty and truth, something of the same high ardor for life in its wistfulness and splendor and pain, something of the same passion for freedom that have made Rebecca the writer she is—the writer at once pungent and terrifyingly sane, tender and brooding and infinitely understanding.

The mother had been a concert pianist before her marriage. She was never strong, and soon she gave up her public work, but she played for her children. “She played Schumann probably as well as anyone has ever played him,” says Rebecca. And the mother and her daughters led an intimate and stimu-

lating intellectual life. There were endless political discussions in that home. That was why Rebecca, reading the suffrage correspondence in the newspapers, plunged into it, “accoutred as she was” with never a thought that she might be considered immature and a child. As a matter of fact, she was neither. And, with her interest in politics continuing and developing, she cannot understand the American's indifference to that engaging game. She wonders at it, large-eyed and puzzled—“the strange indifference of Americans to politics, and their passion—yes, their absolute passion—for personalities.”

III

HAPPILY, Rebecca outlived the school disgrace of her first appearance in print. She was all of nineteen when she joined the staff of *The Freewoman* as a reviewer. Until she was seventeen, she had written poetry. Then, suddenly, she stopped; the desire for self-expression in that form left her and has never returned. She began to work entirely in the medium of that “pungent and terrifyingly sane” prose of hers.

Being pungent and sane, though, is only part of Rebecca West's gift. Clean-cutting, astringent quality of mind she has; it bites up through her talk continually in clipped, telling phrases, in sparkling judgments and opinions, sharp and clear and glistening like little icicles. Her eager questions leap at you as though they had white, pointed fangs. But softness and warmth and passion for life and its living—those she has, too. Indubitably, she finds life, as Ellen Melville found it in that opening chapter of “The Judge,” extravagantly beautiful. Doubtless, she “takes her mind by the arm” many times, as red-haired, lovely Ellen did, and marches it up and down among the sights of the world, and tells it that to be weeping with discontent in the face of beauty—be it the heaped grey-stone beauty of a town,

the heart-searing beauty of life and love—is “a scandalous turning up of the nose at good mercies.”

She would be rather a terrifying young person if it weren't for those warm human qualities of hers that walk hand-in-hand with the clear, hard brilliance of her mind. She has, one knows instinctively, a scathing intolerance of stupidity, of prejudice, of bigotry or narrowness that would warp life to a thing less straight and fine and glowingly beautiful than it can be. She would rush to the defense of her ideas and ideals with avidity and fierceness. But always, there would be that saving grace of understanding and humor, the whimsy humor of the disconcerting child.

At that interview in her room of the Waldorf, she was so tired that it seemed almost cruel to force her to talk. Sometimes, at the point of answering a question, she looked straight ahead of her, hopelessly miserable and mute, like a child at an oral test. The brilliance of her dark eyes was blurred with fatigue. For five weeks she had been traveling about these United States, talking, lecturing, meeting people, being entertained, being lionized, riding on interminable journeys. America, with its “passion for personalities” had made her its own. The Middle West gobbled her like a sweetmeat. She was brave and game—and even grateful—but she was desperately tired.

She is physically not strong. It took her three years to write “The Judge” because, most of the time, doctors were shipping her all over the continent, trying to make her well. They poked her and jabbed her with hypodermics, and listened to her heart and her lungs. She gives one the feel of “a fiery soul that, working out its way, fretted the pigmy body to decay”—she would, that is, if there were not a conviction of secret strength, a miraculous sense of hidden nerve-force and soul-stuff, waiting in reserve beneath that evident physical weariness of hers. She seems almost fragile, and still she fills with her voice

lecture halls where thousands of people gather to hear her speak.

IV

SHE talks about the novel, and about women, and, appropriately, she gives first place among American novelists to Willa Cather. “One of Ours” was a disappointment, she thinks, but “My Antonia” and “The Lost Lady” are subtle, fine, of authentic and lasting beauty. She believes that a new type of fiction will come from our Middle West—“just as it seems to me you have in your country, the beginning of a new type of civilization. Your great distances and your prosperity and comfort are different from anything that the old world knows. People seem to *have* so much more than they do in England. They demand more of life and—get it. Those miles and miles of comfortable little cottages one sees in Middle-Western cities, the homes of workers—it’s wonderful. It’s a standard of physical comfort that we don’t know. . . .”

And yet, the Middle-Western life has not as yet given birth to the best of its fiction, she thinks. Sherwood Anderson writes, she says, as one who is not at ease with himself, one spiritually and physically in unrest: “He writes as a man would write who was working in one of those little workingmen’s houses, as though people were talking all around him, or moving furniture noisily about in the rooms above. There’s a sense of restlessness—no poise.”

As to herself, Rebecca West says that she has not yet decided whether she is to be a novelist or a journalist. She has the modesty that comes of true self-knowledge—that is, she knows that she has her best and biggest work still to do. It might be supposed that a young woman who had two such novels as “The Return of the Soldier” and “The Judge” to her credit before she was thirty would know, without the tiniest nibble of doubt that her working pathway lies clear and unobstructed ahead. Not so Rebecca West. The writing of

those "pungent and terrifyingly sane" criticisms which won her a name when she was scarcely more than a little girl is a delight to her. They woo her back to journalism.

There is, you remember, the story of the young American writing man who tried to sell his stuff to several of the London weekly magazines and reviews. In the office of every one, he met with discouragement. Every editor gave him the same answer: the magazines had their material for months in advance; they were using the work of—here were mentioned, in each case, the names of several young Englishmen then prominent in the literary field, and—Rebecca West. At the office of the last magazine on his list, the American received

The fourth article in the series will be on F. Scott Fitzgerald, by B. F. Wilson. It will appear in the April number.

the same answer—"all full, with the work of Mr. So-and-So and Mr. This-and-That."

"Well, at least," sighed the young man, "you don't give me the name of Rebecca West."

"Oh," replied the large-eyed young person who was the editor, "but I am Rebecca West."

All of which is fairly significant in limning forth the place that this versatile and fiery girl has in the literary life of London. She will have a similar place wherever she may go, because she has a vivid and dynamic personality which will attract worth-while friends as inevitably as it will make worth-while enemies.



Footsteps

By Eleanor Clarage

I hear the footsteps in the street

Tap-tapping by my door;

Nay, stir not, start not, weary heart,

You've heard them all before.

That one was a lady's step,

And these belong to men;

Nay, eyes, forego your futile tears,

He will not come again.

Now a quick, staccato step,

And now a step that's slow;

Oh, cease your listening, silly child—

He passed here long ago!



LIFE is only beautiful with a woman when it becomes unbearable without her.



THE improprieties of yesterday are the fashions of today.



MANY a woman never listens to her husband until he begins to talk in his sleep.

From the Marginalia of a Misogynistic Octogenarian

By Jay Jarrod

I
A MAN'S dealings with a woman consist in either perfecting or spoiling her for some other fellow.

II
MEN grow cynical through disappointment in love; women skilful.

III
THE presence of doubt is the major factor that disturbs a lover during a courtship. The absence of doubt is the major factor that disturbs a husband after marriage.

IV
WHEN a woman is wholly and completely in the wrong it is a long time before she entirely forgives the man.

V
LOVE: the ego in the nude.

VI
A MAN is never so powerless against a woman as when he is head over heels in love with her.

VII
ROMANCES fall into one of two groups: (1) those that end with divorce, and (2) those that end with marriage.

VIII
MEN fill the air with solemn and

mysterious talk. Then some woman comes along and smiles at them, and the whole business is at once forgotten.

IX
A MAN suffers most, not because of the unhappy moments he may have passed with a woman, but because of the happy ones.

X
LOVE's greatest tragedy: the subtlety of the psychological moment.

XI
EVERY woman is fetched by a man's flattery. Now and then there is a case of a woman being fooled by it.

XII
MEN make love by making promises, women by enacting them.

XIII
IN a gay bachelor's life no woman occupies more than a chapter. In a sensible bachelor's life no woman occupies more than a paragraph.

XIV
WHEN Cupid aims at the heart of a woman he dips his arrows in flattery. When he aims at the heart of a man it is man's own egotism that he uses.

XV
To be always in love one must be a complete jackass.

Dinner Aboard the "Dog Star"

By Brian C. Curtis

I

THE New York skyline was fading into the evening haze as the *Helen B.*, dingiest of motor launches, chugged its defiant way down harbor against the incoming tide. Scattered yellow gleams, high up in office buildings, marked belated workers. A Staten Island ferry boat, aglow with light and jammed with homing commuters, hissed swiftly by, and tossed the *Helen* gently in its wake.

Mona Westerly, her summer elegance a violent contrast to the muddy craft which carried her toward the tramp steamer *Dog Star*, sat in the stern. It was with evident disapproval that she eyed the grubby little motor, bouncing industriously up and down on its base; the fly-wheel, spinning sullenly 'round and 'round; and the reverse gear, viciously spattering black grease against the starboard planking. The steady bark of the exhaust deadened her ears to all other sound; and the fumes of burnt gasoline, hurried along by a following wind, blew sickeningly in her face.

She was not afraid; she was not even disconcerted. Supreme self-confidence was as much a tradition in her family as the black carriage horses which, every Sunday for over a hundred years, had drawn the head of the house to his Fifth Avenue church. Generation after generation had passed it on; wealth had strengthened it; pride had nourished it. It was an integral part of her character. But, in her self-reliant mind, she admitted that things were not turning out just as she had

expected. True, the *Dog Star* was not a yacht; but she had supposed that Captain Johnson would at least have a launch of his own.

She glanced quickly at him,—almost furtively, if Mona could have been said ever to do anything furtively. Hands in pockets, broad shoulders hunched up, long legs thrust out in front of him, he sat and gazed intently, unseeing, at the greasy floor-boards. The expression of domineering insolence,—the you-can-go-to-hell-in-a-hack-if-you-don't-like-it look which had attracted her when she first met him,—was, for the moment, gone from his face. He was pondering deeply some inner problem.

Fragments of her friend's warning came back to her.

"You don't know anything about him," the other girl had said.

"Didn't I nurse him through the flu?" Mona had replied.

"But that was five years ago. And how can you tell what a man is really like when he's a helpless patient, and you're the ministering angel who's bringing him back to life and health? You don't know anything about his family, nor his education, nor his bringing-up, nor anything."

"Lord love us," cried Mona, "I'm not going to marry the man! I'm just going out to dinner on board his boat."

"Yes," replied her friend scathingly, "and one time out in California, you just went across the border into Mexico to see what it would feel like to be in an enemy country. Do you want another performance of that kind?"

"I got myself out, didn't I?" asked Mona combatively.

"Just barely," the other girl admitted. "This thing is foolish,—it's unwise,—and you know very well that, if your family were in town, they wouldn't let you do it."

To which Mona had answered nothing, but had gone serenely on her way. Some people, quite effortlessly and unconsciously, take life into their own hands and do with it as they please. Mona was one of these. To be sure, she sometimes got into a mess, but she was always able to get herself out. This idea of dinner on a tramp steamer interested her. It would be something new and amusing, something she had never done before. That always tempted her. It would be a chance to see what these men were like, and how they lived; probably to hear strange yarns of the sea, told, as they should be told, over a mess table, with the sound of the waves for accompaniment.

And, after all, she felt that she knew Captain Johnson fairly well, even if she had lost sight of him for five years. One can't, she argued, nurse a man for weeks without learning something about his character. She recognized in him a kindred spirit,—one who shared with her the ability to cope with the world, to make it do what he wanted.

He was not a gentleman; no one would ever accuse him of that. Doubtless he had done things that were better not talked about; but it had always seemed to her that men,—men of his type, at least,—treated a woman with just about the amount of respect which she demanded of them,—no more, no less. On that score she had no qualms. And, at worst, what harm could come to her, with a crew, other officers, perhaps even other guests, on board?

She had shot a tiger in India,—she had driven an ambulance at the front. Why should she hesitate to accept this seaman's invitation? It was ridiculous.

The man at the wheel half turned.

"That's her over there, ain't it?" he inquired of the captain, jerking his

head in the direction of a dim black shape ahead of them.

The captain looked up, nodded. The man at the wheel spat out a large gob of tobacco juice, looked inquisitively at Mona, and turned away. A decrepit derby perched on top of his head, its greasy brim jammed down over his eyes. His long hair straggled across his collar in back, and his colorless clothes hung limply from his dejected frame. He was not a figure to inspire confidence.

The motor stopped abruptly, and, in the uncanny silence which followed, they seemed to creep guiltily into the black shadow of the *Dog Star*. Grim, ugly, daubed with red lead, her side towered menacingly over them, blotting out full half of the darkening sky. A single light showed at her masthead; a faint ray from the deck-house shone feebly on the water. All else was darkness. No one stirred on board.

Mona followed Captain Johnson up the ladder.

II

As she reached the deck, the *Helen's* motor resumed its staccato bark. With a feeling of vague uneasiness, she watched the little boat fade quickly into the gathering gloom. The sound of the exhaust grew fainter,—fainter,—was gone. In silence she permitted the captain to lead her into the cabin.

A single kerosene lamp flickered against the low ceiling. It cast its uncertain light on the dining table, which, with its eight swivel chairs, almost filled the room. On each side a door led out on deck.

"That," said the captain, pointing to a closed door at the forward end, "is the chart room." He rattled the knob. "It's always kept locked when I'm on shore. Matter of form,—anyone could crawl in through the port-hole."

He went to the after end of the cabin. There was a closed door on each side, and between them opened a narrow passageway, dimly illuminated

by an invisible light which burned somewhere at the far end. He took a key from his pocket, unlocked one of the doors, entered a small cabin and lit a lamp.

"This is where I live," he said. "Over there"—he pointed to the other closed door,—“is the chief engineer's cabin, but we shan't be bothered by him. He's on shore."

"And where are the rest of your officers—and all your crew?" asked Mona.

The captain was busy tugging at a drawer under his bunk. For a moment he did not answer. Then he looked at her calmly, the old insolent expression strong in his face.

"They're all on shore," he said quietly. . . . "I'm in the habit of having the boat to myself when I bring ladies on board."

He turned back to the drawer.

Mona stood perfectly still, the full significance of his words gradually becoming clear to her. For a brief moment, panic took possession of her. A wild, unreasoning desire to escape—*at once—anywhere—became irresistible.* She stole quickly down the dark passage.

The light grew brighter as she reached the far end; it came from a single burner, set in the overhead planking of what was evidently the galley. Her eyes passed rapidly over the hanging pots and pans, and came to rest on a kettle sitting on the stove. It murmured softly to itself, and a feather of steam rose from its spout. The captain had not been back here. There must be someone else on board.

Something strange about a shadow in the corner attracted her attention, and, for the first time, she looked full at it. She almost screamed. Perfectly motionless, staring steadily at her, a man crouched on a chair,—a negro, in whose face seemed concentrated all the bestiality which the human race had thrown off in the course of the ages. She turned, and went swiftly back to the cabin.

The captain was filling two glasses from a bottle.

"Well," he remarked genially, "been inspecting my quarters? How do you like my cook? Good man, that, but he's deaf and dumb. Come's from Senegal. Never leaves the ship. Dandy watchman."

He pushed one of the glasses toward her, raised the other himself. "Here's to you—and to us!" He tipped back his head, and poured the liquor down at one gulp. "You needn't be afraid of it," he reassured her, "it's the real stuff—absolutely safe."

"Thank you, but I don't care for any." She paused. . . . "Captain," she went on, in a level voice, "you've made a mistake. I'll have to ask you to take me ashore at once."

"Sorry,"—he smiled indulgently, as if he regretted having to deny a spoiled child a piece of candy—"but it's too late. I've dismissed the launch, and it won't be back until eight in the morning. In the meantime,"—he reached out to take her hand,—“you and I will have a chance to become thoroughly acquainted,—even better than we were in 1918, when you were such a peach of a nurse."

She drew back her hand angrily.

"I think not," she said in scornful tones. "You don't understand me, Captain. You're used to women you can bully,—women that you can order 'round,—women who like you all the better because you make them do just what *you* want."

He looked at her, unmoved, and poured another glass for himself.

"I'm different," she went on. "I don't take orders from anybody, much less from a rum-soaked sailor." Her temper rose. "I suppose you thought that just because you're big and good-looking," she taunted him, "I'd fall for you.—Well, I'm not that kind. I'm no waterfront woman; I'm the daughter of Augustus Westerly.—You can't handle me, and down inside of you, you know it.—Why, you wouldn't even dare touch me!"

He set his empty glass down hard on the table.

"I suppose you really believe that," he said slowly.

"Of course I do," she flashed back at him, "and so do you."

"Here's the trouble with you," he announced judicially, ignoring her last remark. "You've got so damn much money, and your family is so high up, that you've clean forgot you're nothing but a woman. It isn't your fault; you were born that way. And you've got so thoroughly used to the idea that, when you speak, the rest of the world steps lively, that you've never stopped to wonder why.—See what I mean?—You've just taken it for granted that you're a pretty remarkable girl, and that's the reason everyone gets down on his knees every time you come around."

"They don't!" she cried angrily. "You're talking utter rot!"

"I'm not talking rot," he replied. "I'm just explaining to you that this is one place where your money and your family don't mean one damn little thing.—I'm saving you the bother of trying to play the high and mighty here—it won't do you any good. Back there,"—he nodded his head in the general direction of New York,—“just the mention of your name would get you anything you want. I don't doubt the same thing is true in Paris, or in London, or most any place else in the world. But out here I'm boss, and I'm not afraid of you, nor your family, nor anyone else.” His teeth snapped shut, and his lips tightened.

"Of course you're not," she replied impatiently, "but that's not going to help you out in court."

"Don't think you can scare me by ringing in the law. I know your family. Law courts mean publicity. You'll feel differently about that in the morning."

"But what's the idea?" she asked eagerly. "What are you trying to get out of me? Money? Why are you keeping me here against my will?"

"Because I want to," he answered shortly. "You women of the rich think you're sacred. You think no man would dare harm you. Poor women have to fight the world,—they have to fight against men,—why shouldn't you? How are you any better than they? Why should you be sheltered and coddled and kept away from harm?"

She laughed triumphantly. "I defy you to find any poor woman who's knocked around as much as I have. Coddled? Why, I've roughed it all over the world."

"You mean you've lived outdoors, and come up against some pretty tough men, and all that? Sure, but always with that name of yours to hold over people's heads. You've never been down and out, with no one to turn to for help,—no one but yourself to give you a pat on the back. All the 'roughing it' you've done has been play—just like coming out here to-night. You thought it would be something different,—didn't you? Something new to tell the willy-boys up on the Avenue!" His voice was rising. "Well, I'll give you something to tell 'em—and I'll have something to tell my own pals—how Augustus Westerly's daughter spent the night with me on board the old *Dog Star*! Have some Scotch!" He belowered the last in a commanding voice.

"I never drink Scotch," she replied quietly.

"All right," he said, "I'll get you something you can drink."

He went into his cabin and knelt down beside his bunk. The door stood open. The key was in the key-hole. Quietly Mona pushed the door to. The latch clicked softly. She turned the key, put it in the pocket of her skirt, and stole out on deck, expecting at any minute to hear his angry voice.

III

IN the quarter hour since she had come on board the haze had converted itself into a fog, and had closed down upon the ship. It was a wall, a thick.

impenetrable wall, against which the ray of light, shining through the open door of the cabin, struck and stopped dead. It hemmed the ship in; it isolated her; it made the silence ghostly. What was the captain doing in his cabin? Why wasn't he beating on the door, struggling to get out? And why was she standing here, inert, instead of trying to make her escape? There must be other ships near by, even though invisible in that blinding fog. Sound carried a long distance over the water. She ran to the rail.

"Ahoy!" she shouted. "Help! Send a boat over to the *Dog Star*! Help! Help!"

She listened. There was no answering hail. Her voice sounded ridiculously feeble; the fog seemed to swallow it up. Nevertheless, it was her only chance.

"Help!" she cried again. "Hel—"

A strong, hard hand closed over her mouth.

"You damn little fool!" snarled the captain. "Stop that racket! I suppose you thought I'd sit there quietly, with a port-hole big enough for two men to climb through, and listen to you bring the whole harbor down on us."

He seized her by the shoulders, and pushed her toward the open door of the deck-house. Twisting and turning, she fought to get away. Tiring of his slow progress, he picked her up bodily, and started to carry her in. Her right hand, flung sharply around behind his back, came in contact with something heavy and cold in his hip pocket. Automatically, she grasped this object, pulled it out, and brought it down, with every ounce of her strength, upon his head.

The grip of his arms about her suddenly relaxed; silently he sank on the deck. She got up unsteadily. The cold, hard thing was still in her hand. From a swelling on his head, a little blood was beginning to trickle. Huddled upon the deck, the cabin lamp playing on him through the open door like a spotlight, his body looked very small

and harmless. She wondered dully if she had killed him.

She became aware of a glimmer of light down the deck. A door was opening slowly. A head appeared, remained motionless for a second; then a body slipped through. The door closed noiselessly.

She strained her eyes into the blackness. She could see nothing, but her ears told her that stealthy feet were coming slowly nearer. She gripped the hard thing in her hand more firmly, and, for the first time, became conscious of the fact that it was an automatic pistol. Strength came back to her; her mind cleared.

"Come one step nearer," she said in a loud voice, "and I'll shoot." . . . Then she remembered the negro was deaf and dumb!

She listened intently. The thing was still moving; it had almost reached the edge of the circle of light in which she stood. She raised her pistol and pulled the trigger. A metallic click was the only response.

She felt suddenly very weak. The creature stopped. It seemed to hover just beyond the rim of darkness. She could hear its breathing; she could feel its presence; but she could see nothing.

She stepped quickly back into the cabin, pulled the door to, and slid the bolt. She rushed across to the door on the other side, and locked it in the same way. Then she opened the magazine of the pistol. It was empty. . . .

There must be cartridges somewhere. One after another, she pulled out the drawers from the dining-table and dumped their contents on the floor. Nothing but jangling silver and soiled napkins. A small cabinet hung against the side of the compartment. It was locked. With the butt of her pistol, she smashed in the door. On the top shelf, her groping hand discovered a little cardboard box. It was heavy, and it rattled dully. She tore off the cover. Neat rows of tiny brass cylinders met her triumphant gaze.

Carefully and methodically she loaded

the magazine, slipped the first cartridge into the chamber, and took up her position with her back against the door leading forward to the chart-room. She drew a long breath. Here she felt reasonably secure. The doors on either side, giving on the deck, she had bolted; the door behind her was locked; and the two doors opposite marked empty cabins. Between these cabins was the corridor leading to the galley, down which she could see from where she stood. It was narrow; and the light at the far end would have thrown into immediate relief anyone coming along it.

She glanced confidently around, and again almost screamed. With the same feeling of terror, of horror, of unreasoning dread, she saw, at one of the port-holes, the black face of the Senegalese cook. His nose was flattened against the glass. His eyes were fixed intently, hungrily, on her face. How long he had been there she did not know.

For a second, they stared at each other; then his head disappeared. Un- easily, she watched the other port-holes. There was no sign of him there; but suddenly the passageway opposite her, instead of being a long, narrow alley through which she could see dimly into the galley, became merely a black, rectangular patch in the wall!

The light in the galley had gone out.

There could be only one meaning to that. Someone wanted to come down the passage without being seen; someone who knew that she stood in such a position that any approaching figure would have been silhouetted against the light at the far end. Every nerve tense, she waited. There was not a sound. Was he stealing along the corridor on tip-toe? . . . She peered into the blackness until her eyes ached. . . . Or was he waiting craftily, just beyond the range of the cabin light, to charge upon her when her attention flagged? Maybe he was standing there now, watching. Quickly she raised her pistol, fired. A sharp report, then utter silence.

A thin wisp of smoke drifted across the room. The smell of burnt powder stung her nostrils. . . .

Maybe he was creeping down the passage on hands and knees, hidden from her by the table in the middle of the room! Heart in mouth, she crouched quickly, and looked beneath it. Nothing. She leaned back wearily against the door—and felt, rather than heard, a key moving in the lock.

She whirled around, but it was too late. The door was already open; the huge figure of the black cook almost filled it. Like lightning, his hand shot out, seized her right wrist, twisted it painfully. The pistol fell to the floor. He kicked it disdainfully into a corner. Paying no heed to her struggles, he picked her up, carried her to the table, deposited her on it, and pinned down her shoulders.

His leering black face came close. His gloating eyes stared into hers. Little beads of perspiration stood out on his oily forehead. His hot, noisome breath almost suffocated her.

Her courage melted; her strength left her. Nothing remained but infinite loathing.

IV

OF what happened next, she had only a confused memory. It may be that she lost consciousness for the fraction of a second. She knew that there was a roar of rage, and that, of a sudden, the negro and the captain were in the middle of the floor, clinched in each other's arms. The captain's face was white; his jaw was set; his breath came in short gasps. With one free arm, he flayed the negro in the stomach. The latter, his lips parted in a snarling grin, was slowly working his hands up toward the white man's throat.

Back and forth they fought. They caromed off one wall, and crashed into the door which led out on deck. With a loud crack, it flew open, but the resistance was enough to throw them back into the cabin again. They charged

into the table, and almost shook it from its foundation. A swivel chair, wrenched from its socket, was flung half-way across the room.

Mona had seen fights before, but never one like this. Pressed into a corner, she watched, torn between elation and fear. Automatically she had picked up the pistol, which lay at her feet.

Those black hands were edging up nearer and nearer to the white throat.

"Look out, Captain!" she shrieked, "he'll strangle you!"

With a mighty jerk, the captain tore himself loose. Under his own momentum, he spun half way round, and fell upon his hands and knees. In an instant the black was on his back, arms clinched around his neck. Slowly the captain rose, the negro still clinging to him. Staggering under the weight, he backed over to where the cabinet protruded from the wall, and began methodically pounding the negro's back against its sharp corner.

It was too much for the black man. Changing his tactics, he slid his arms underneath the captain's, lifted him off his feet, and rushed him toward the open door which led out on deck. As they reached the doorway, the captain raised his legs, and placed one foot against each side of the frame. His knees bent, then straightened out in a tremendous shove. The force of the movement carried the negro off his feet. He shot backward through the air like a cannon-ball, and landed on his back on the opposite side of the room, the captain on top of him. The black's head snapped back through a half circle, and brought up with crushing impact against the raised metal sill of the other door. He lay quite still.

The captain rose shakily.

"There, you damned black son of a swine," he swore through shut teeth, "I guess that'll teach you." He leaned over the fallen man. There was no sign of breathing. He put his hand on his breast. "Hell!" he exclaimed. "That's the end of him."

He turned on Mona, his eyes blaz-

ing. "And it's all your fault, you little fool! You'll pay for this."

He started toward her.

"Stand back," she said, raising her pistol.

"You little fool!" He laughed hysterically. "Do you think I'm scared of you? Why, I've just killed a man for your sake! And a mighty good man, too. Do you know that I stand a chance of going to the jug, or even to the chair, on your account? And then you stand up and threaten me with an empty pistol!"

"You saved me just now," Mona admitted, trying to make her voice sound calm, "but you put me in danger in the first place. I don't owe you anything. Not a thing! And you're wrong about this gun. It is loaded, and if you come one step nearer, I'll shoot."

He laughed. "Bluff!" he shouted. "Pure bluff."

He took a step forward. "You haven't the nerve!" he sneered. "And besides, it's empty! Look for yourself and see!" He took another step.

She tried to hold the pistol still, but her hand began to waver. Quickly she pulled the trigger. The detonation filled the cabin. The captain clutched his chest. A look of surprise mingled with the expression of pain on his face. Without a word, he fell. . . .

Mona looked stupidly at his body. Very deliberately she walked across the room, laid the pistol on the table, and sat down in a chair. She fully expected to faint. . . .

He was dead; of that she was sure. No need to feel his pulse, test his breathing. Something inside her told her that she had killed him. She gazed dully at the two bodies stretched upon the floor. She felt no remorse. They were both bad; they would have harmed her if they could.

The ship was very still. Somewhere a clock ticked. The sea lapped quietly against the metal hull.

She went across to the captain's cabin, unlocked the door, looked in. An alarm

clock hung over his bunk. Quarter past ten. At eight in the morning, he had said, the launch would return. Almost ten hours to wait. And what would happen then? She looked again at the two bodies on the floor. Should she throw them overboard? What was the use? She couldn't bring herself to touch them, anyway.

She got up, went out on deck. The single light, unblinking at the mast head, sent weird shadows sliding in and out as it swung in the lazy swell which came in from the ocean. The fog still pressed close. Off in the distance, the mournful blast of a horn told of some vessel making her way blindly up harbor—a liner, maybe, full of cheerful people in evening dress, chatting in the brightly lighted smoking-room over their last cocktails.

She looked about her. On each side, the wet deck stretched away into unknown blackness. Thin little creaking noises came from beyond the circle of light in which she stood. Bravely she started down the deck. The darkness shut in. Vague, unfamiliar shapes were all around her. She gasped as something cold and moist touched her face. A piece of cloth hanging on a line. She turned and looked back. The cabin lamp shone through the fog with a warm, misty glow. Slowly she retraced her steps.

There they lay on the floor. She reached out tentatively,—touched the captain's hand. Already it was cold. She drew back with a shudder.

Aimlessly she wandered to the door of his cabin. Half past ten. Nine and a half hours to wait. An open bottle on the stand beside his bed caught her eye. "Scotch," the label said. She raised it

to her lips, forced down a mouthful of the scorching stuff. It warmed her; it gave her strength. She examined the bottle closely; it was almost full. She took another swallow. It went down more easily.

"That's not so bad," she said aloud.

V

TIM BARBER, skipper of the *Helen B*—dingiest of motor launches—still tells with gusto of the last woman he took out to the *Dog Star*.

"So I comes back at eight in the mornin'," he concludes, "just like the captain told me. And there she was, a-prancin' up and down the deck in the sunshine, gay as you please. She comes hoppin' down the ladder all by herself."

"The Captain," she says, 'ish not goin' shore sh'mornin'." Tight, she was!

"Well," thinks I, 'big night they must have had. The old man's probably passed out in his bunk.' So I takes her back to the Battery, her sittin' in the stern very dignified, and not sayin' a word. But when she gets out, she can't hardly walk, her legs is so bad."

"Well, that's the last time I ever set eyes on her. But do you know what they found out on the *Dog Star*?" Here he pauses impressively. "The Cap'n an' the nigger cook, deader'n codfish,—both of 'em. The nigger with his head stove in, and the cap'n—he was shot."

"No," he asserts roundly, "I ain't no idea who she was, and I ain't no idea what she looked like. It was dark when I took her out in the evenin', and she had one of those veil things over her face in the mornin'. But she was dressed swell, real swell."



The Passing Parade

A WICKER perambulator . . . a limousine bearing a bride and groom . . . a hearse and eight carriages.



Bread and Butter

By Nancy Hoyt

I

THE lawn at "Helmways" sloped down from the back portico of the house, and ended in a group of copper beeches near a formal yew garden. Lady Puttenham, staring thoughtfully out of the open window of her study, noticed Christa Gherardi, slim, bareheaded, her hair the color of the beech leaves, sitting with the children in the shade under the trees. Lady Puttenham examined the picture they presented to her for a moment. Was it wise, was it, perhaps, *safe* to trust the dear children with the girl? Of course there were the highest references from Sybil Wainwright and her husband, but as Colonel Wainwright had been stationed for several years in Cologne, they were naturally inured to seeing Germans as, more or less, human beings who could be safely allowed to work for one.

Here in England it seemed almost unnecessary to let one's charity begin so far from home that one took in and sheltered a German professor's daughter.

There were, on the other hand, several points in her favor; she had a number of diplomas for her cleverness in school—too young, of course, for a teacher's certificate—and seemed to teach the children fairly well; she mended the finer household linen nicely, and one paid her—well, suitably, of course, but not too much. Even Lady Puttenham, who considered a parlor-maid grossly overpaid at two pounds a month, had to admit that Christine von

Gherardi was not an extravagance. Yes, one would allow things to rest for the present.

Sighing, she returned to the household accounts, wrote an admonitory letter to the butcher, and a pleasant one to Lord Boughton, about his cows (aristocratic animals, no doubt), which still persisted in straying into her pastures. With a final sigh of relief she stamped the notes, laid them in a neat pile, and adjusted her several old-fashioned diamond rings to a more comfortable position.

A handsome woman, Lady Puttenham; a fine figure of a woman, large-eyed, large teeth, high nose, firm bosom, all this surmounted by a solid arrangement of brown hair. Without doubt she was the best looking of the Bullivant women. There had been three of them. Edith, the eldest, "poor Edie," a thin caricature of Olivia, lean, angular, incredibly toothy, with fastly greying curly hair and a passion for snuff-colored crochet jumpers of shapeless design; Olivia herself, who at thirty, just before her marriage to Sir Charles, had practised and perfected that signature which was so like her: "Olivia Puttenham," full, flowing, well-bred and carefully controlled, it was a triumph in its own way: then Ethel, the youngest, who still had at thirty-seven a touch of faded prettiness, but had not somehow (in vulgar speech) "got off." The trouble with Ethel was that she had no determination.

Now Edward, the only brother, and she, Olivia, had known what they wanted to do and had, calmly and competently, gone ahead and done it. Lady

Puttenham fastened her purple cardigan and stepped out on the terrace.

II

CHRISTA sat on the grass far below, sewing. The needle stabbed in and out of the embroidery frame with a machine-like regularity. The youngest child, a little boy of two, sat blandly on a blanket chewing at a long piece of grass. Christa leaned over and adeptly removed it, hardly abandoning the sewing for a moment. Cicely enviously watched Job and Peter, the two older boys, knocking wildly at croquet balls in a disorganized game which consisted chiefly in bumping the opponent's anklebone with one of the projectiles.

Cicely was a child of five, embittered by her unfair position, for where Job could and did bully and order around Peter, by virtue of his two years' seniority and a year at preparatory school, and both of them could tease and look down on her, she was not allowed the same superior attitude or its perquisites in regard to Cyril, the infant. It was rather like being the two in a pack of cards; all the larger cards looked down on one in sequence, but when one took one's turn, there was left only the ace, which was, in a way, the one to be made the most fuss of in the whole pack . . . unfair, horribly unfair.

Lady Puttenham walked into the house again and Christa, forsaking her obvious air of industry, stretched and lay back lazily.

"The all-seeing eye removes itself," she murmured irreverently, and giggled. Then straightened again to powder her nose and arrange the linen ruffles of her blouse into a more seemly neatness, for the blouse, once one of her mother's, was several sizes too large and she had not yet cut it down to fit.

Coming down the lawn was Timothy Bullivant, tall, blond, twenty-four, and the favored nephew of Lady Puttenham.

"Hello, Christa, how are the kids?" he called, a polite version of the

Tommies' "Well, nurse, how's Baby?" Then he turned around a little anxiously lest his aunt would have heard the "Christa" instead of the "Miss Er-uh" which one generally called a nursery governess.

"Oh, they are tranquil enough now," she answered. "But sometimes—I I find myself liking them when they are pleasant and loathing them most intensely when they are horrid. I have none of the all-embracing and forgiving love of children one hears about, particularly when Job is being the overlord and bully. Certainly I am not cut out to be a governess, no."

Timothy lazily dropped onto the ground beside her and set the baby a bad example by chewing a long, feathery bit of grass. He stared up through the leaves with half-shut, sleepy eyes.

"Wonder what you were cut out for?" he said.

"I think perhaps it would be nice to be a very grand lady (modest wish, isn't it?), with time to spend hours putting on stuff from little pink and mauve jars—you know. When I grew up the war was, of course, everything, and one did not buy unnecessary rubbish. Since then I have only been able to afford a little box of powder occasionally," she rolled the discreet little box over for his inspection, "and even that is not wise, not for a governess. Yes, I think I should like to be a great lady, and if not that, perhaps to be her maid. No, it would be much nicer to make the stuff oneself and know how foolish it was."

"You mean one of those beauty-specialist people?" he asked.

She nodded.

"I knew one once," he continued; "topping girl she was. Always saying 'fancy that' in a very refined voice, though. Not your type, Christa."

"Oh, yes, you think I am the open air, fresh from the fields type, that I should belong to the '*Wandervogel*' and live in the open. Well, I am too old for the '*Wandervogel*,' they won't have you if you are over twenty; but I grant you one must live. It is a most vexed

question—living. However, one continues doing it, which answers Hamlet. What one detests is always living on someone else. Aah, I hate that!" she was vehement.

"What a lot of awfully learned stuff you say, Christa! Quite over my head," he drawled.

"So now you attempt to snub me. It is always that way with the English. When they would be superior and snubbing they pretend they cannot understand, which very successfully makes you feel boring and garrulous." She sighed lightly.

"Christa, my dear, don't be ridiculous. 'Bore me'? Well, rather not." He moved nearer and touched her pricked, work-shabby fingers. They were still long and slim and white. "Tomorrow's the fortnightly day-off, isn't it?"

She nodded.

"Listen to me; you can quite well leave here after lunch, get the train at Guilford and be in London in an hour. We'll have tea, trot around together, dance, do something jolly, and you'll get back in time. Do!" He was persuasive.

"I don't think I can, but it would be fun, wouldn't it?" She hesitated, pulling at one of the stray hairs, curling it round a finger and then unwinding it. "Yes, I think it could be managed. It's been a long time since I had a good time. . . ."

Those first years of the war, her age just that of each year, were blurred. But nineteen-sixteen and seventeen, yes, she could remember them clearly. She was just growing up, a *backfisch*, really. She remembered the half-pathetic, half-gay parties for the young officers, some of them so nice and others so snobbish: "Your grandmother was a von Below? A very good family; your father's mother, *nicht wahr?* And your mother, American, wasn't she?"

Hateful young men! She was glad poor Mama had died before the war and their suspicions cast a shadow. . . . But others in their new uniforms toast-

ing one in the pale gold Hock for the last time at family parties before leaving for the front, yes, they were touching. Then Franz, his humorous and cynical young face with the sabre cut and the smooth dark hair, the Austrian uniform which one wasn't used to in Munich. That last dance, when they played the sweet, hackneyed tune, "*Bubchen, du bist mein*"—how did it go? Something about a "guiding star" wasn't it? Such a laughing young man was Franz, always laughing. "Good-bye, Franz. Good-bye, 'Tintchen.'" . . .

Well, it was all over now, so very much all over. She remembered when she was young and sentimental, looking at letters and snapshots and trying vainly to conjure up some picture, to sigh romantically over them. And now she didn't dare look at letters or snapshots; it was too painful, too successful an experiment. One must try to forget and enjoy life a little. . . .

"Very well," she said finally, "I will do it. We will arrange things later."

"Jolly old Christa; that's splendid. I expect I'd better be running along now. Baring-Fox is motoring over this afternoon. I think that's his car on the drive now," he said, looking up toward the house.

"Baring-Fox? Oh, that is the young friend from Cambridge, the very undergraduate youth."

"You don't like him?" he asked. "He's really a very good chap, you know."

"Ah, yes, exactly. A little weak as to lower lip and chin and, of course, some might not like the too-lustrous eyes, but a splendid chap, no doubt." She smiled maliciously.

"Now you are being nasty, but I know you don't mean it. Until later, then." And he ran up the long, sloping lawn toward the house.

Christine bit a piece of thread off viciously and went on sewing. She mused over Timothy. He was nice, oh, very nice; irritating, sometimes, but one knew he was—there was no other word but the time-worn one—a gentleman.

Life in this place was deadly. Lady Puttenham would have been a joke if one lived with one's own family and could return to them, saying, "We met the most priceless woman today. Too awful! You would have appreciated her," but it was a wry joke, a very sour one, being under her roof and rule all the time. The war—the strange, topsyturvy things that had happened. She pulled out a letter from her pocket and looked at it. The edges were worn almost woolly from re-reading. It was addressed in an amusing hand with many funny little quirks—"Franz always dots the I's and crosses the T's, Christa"—Yes, but in such an original way, you will admit." The letter was from the Austrian-Italian frontier in the Alps.

"Everything here is white, white, white; the clothes, shoes, everything. Even the rifles are painted white. When one goes out on a scouting expedition one expects to see the other men slowly, very slowly, freeze into just a few more hummocks of snow. Sometimes they do."

"The glare begins to drive me a little mad. It is worst at noon and best just before dawn, when the sun rises, first cold lemon-green, then changing till the place is lit up by little flickering flames—like your hair in the firelight. You see I am growing idiotic, my dear. . . ."

Just one more hummock of snow. . . .

III

STUPIDLY Christa gathered the sewing things and shepherded the children back to the house. Two hours later, her spirits almost restored to cheerfulness (she was rather a volatile young person), she was walking down the lawn toward the yew garden again. The children were having the after-supper hour with their mother, and if she ate her own supper quickly, she had left a half-hour to herself.

Clutched in one hand was a packet of Gold Flakes, for it was her most indiscreet practice, to smoke a cigarette there

every evening in the maze. The hedges luckily were over eight feet high, thanks to a hundred years' careful gardening, and detection at that hour was unlikely.

It was warm in the maze, almost stuffy. One could smell the close, stifling smell of the nearby box bushes which were cut in forms of birds and formal trees. *"The secret smell of box."* Wasn't that a quotation from someone? It really had a dusty sort of perfume. She walked up and down in one of the narrow ways, inhaling the smoke with slow satisfaction. Little grey moths fluttered in and out of the close branches of the yew. It was very quiet.

From a small court near her she could hear sounds of voices; they were walking toward her, and, frightened, she stamped the cigarette out and shrank back against the hedges. But they stopped short of the passage, probably to sit down on one of the benches in the center. It was Timothy and Basil Baring-Fox. She could hear their voices plainly. Basil spoke first.

"How about tomorrow night?"

"That's quite all right, I've arranged it all." This was Timothy speaking.

"What sort of girl is she? Pretty?"

"No-o, not exactly; not bad, though."

Christa's cheeks flamed furiously. He didn't think her pretty! She, who had always, always been considered lovely. (*"Little flickering flames."*)

Ah, hateful, hateful!

"What sort, then?"

"Not stupid. I hate clever women myself, but she's not too clever—knows her way around a bit, I imagine. In fact, easy meat, old chap."

"Cold mutton' what? Good show that. I suppose foreign governesses usually are rather rapid. Shall I fix it up with Violet Valerie, then?"

"Right-o. Ten o'clock tomorrow night at Rector's."

The ground swayed gently under her feet and she clutched at a branch for support. Several moths flew out and fluttered against her face. She brushed them away and stood breathing quickly, two little white spots marking pinched

nostrils. Her color was gone and faint freckles stood out clearly on her face.

She clenched one hand again and again. What would she do and where could she go? America—was fifty pounds, every penny she had, enough? There was an aunt there, but she didn't want to live off some vague aunt. The manager at that linen place in Berlin, Mosse, that was the place, had told her of their big shop in Fifth Avenue. She could do fine embroidery, thank God. America meant escape at least. Hurrying, running almost, she turned toward the house.

At the threshold stood Lady Puttenham, draped magnificently in a mauve satin tea-gown.

"Just a minute, Miss Gherardi."

"Yes, Lady Puttenham?"

"There is something I wish to speak to you about. As you know, I have overlooked many things, such as your nationality, in taking you in, but really I cannot allow a photograph of a soldier in a German uniform—"

"My dead fiancé, in an Austrian officer's uniform."

"Please do not interrupt, it is impertinent—in an enemy uniform and framed in a military frame bearing some alien insignia, to stand on your dressing-table where my children might see it. It must be removed."

A pulse of hot emotion almost blinded her. Queer, what one's heart does, in love, in rage. . . . So the woman had been searching her room. Christine smiled.

"You are quite right, Lady Puttenham, it *will* be removed—tonight, in fact. I am starting for America this evening and it would most distress me to leave the picture behind. I go to London first for a visa, you know."

Lady Puttenham stared. Her prominent eyes bulged and she made gobbling noises like a turkey.

"Go to America? Leave for London? You must be mad, you ungrateful creature! It is disgraceful, leaving without notice this way. Of course you know you will forfeit this month's salary?"

"Of course, Lady Puttenham; and I trust you will find the three pounds convenient. Please excuse me so I may go and pack." She made a stiff little bow and ran up the stairs.

The excitement of throwing stuff into your trunk and slamming the lid down, of catching up the things you have forgotten and pushing them into a portmanteau. She missed her sewing bag and visualized it suddenly as having been left in the hall when she spoke to Lady Puttenham. There it was on the table, the sewing half out and the needle dangling.

"What about tomorrow, Christa?" It was Timothy talking to her, cool and smiling as usual.

"Alas," she said, shrugging slightly, "I fear it will be impossible—I shall be so extremely busy with passports and things. You did not know I was leaving for America? Please accept my regrets and tender them also to Mr. Baring-Fox. Good-bye."

IV

LADY PUTTENHAM sat at her desk again. Several days had passed since Christine's inexcusable departure, since when she had written a number of little notes to very high-grade agencies requesting information as to governesses and stating a few necessary points, "willing, industrious, must be good needle-woman and Church of England. Prefer middle-aged gentlewoman with settled habits." She wrote an answer to a request for an appointment and blotted it carefully.

"Timothy," she said, looking up, "that was a terrible girl, terrible and so ungrateful. But what else could we expect from a German? I pray we never have such an experience again."

"She was a rum one, all right, Aunt Olivia."

Lady Puttenham sighed and nodded sagely.

"The trouble with that girl," she remarked slowly, "the real trouble was she didn't know which side her bread was buttered."

Two Poems

By Eugene C. Dolson

Tonight

TONIGHT the streets are lit,
The city is full of life,
Full of love—
Everywhere man and woman mated together.

So it is the world over,
But what to us is the world?

I hold you close in my arms.
You are my world,
My world that knows no yesterday,
No tomorrow.

We do not push the curtain aside
To look into the next room.

The Revealment

WHEN the sun is up,
The marts are crowded with traffickers.
I meet them face to face,
Walk with them, converse with them,
But they know me not,
And they know not one another.
I do not seek you then,
For how could I give you my heart wholly?
Hearts are hidden
When light is on land and sea.
It is only in the night time,
When sunlight is gone out,
When the world is in darkness,
Or lit dimly by scattered stars
And a slim disk of moon
Wheeling out through wind-blown clouds,
That you wait for me in secret places,
And I go to meet you there,
And open my heart to you—and my arms,
And you know me as I am.



Where Is Thy Sting?

By Nunnally Johnson

I

ON the day of Emerson's death—to be exact, less than a half-hour afterward—Tate bought a walking-stick, one like Reese's.

He carried it into the office the next morning, and so naturally that nobody noticed. And, later, passing Reese on the way to the water-cooler, he called carelessly, "H'lo," and Reese replied, "H'lo, there," in just the casual way that Tate had hoped. After the last edition had gone they went out together, each with his stick hanging loosely from his bent arm, and rolled a game of pool.

Afterward, when they parted, Reese said, "Well, see you tomorrow," and Tate answered, "Righto!"

There, at last, you might say, was camaraderie. Something bubbled inside Tate, something sweet-flavored and exciting. He swung his stick gayly.

II

REESE carried his stick unaffectedly, just as he smoked cigars without baying around to impress the cigarette-smokers. It was a *savoir faire* which Tate recognized, the day he came on the *World-Intelligencer* a year before, as the unostentatious symbol of success. Proctor and Andrews carried sticks. It was an admirable and alluring gesture. Intensely he aspired to it.

It was a short year but a full one that reached its glorious flower for him in Emerson's death, the acquisition of the stick, and the fellowly camaraderie with Reese. For, at the outset, he was thrown into a disadvantage. Two weeks

after coming on the paper he was withdrawn completely from the main channel of journalism, the city news department, and assigned to write obituaries. He was, then, just beginning to appreciate the privilege of associating with practising reporters and picking up, by emulation, the rudiments of their manners and philosophy.

One year of chronicling the passing on of worthy citizens, he reflected bitterly, and he would be settled, helpless, in the most circumscribed of newspaper spheres. Two years of it, he felt, and he would be established, just as Old Morrison, the chief obit man, was then established, definitely and irretrievably as an Obit Man—Tate the Obit Man—nothing more, nothing less.

It was so different, that, far, from what he had expected, had wanted. Never to cover a boiler-makers' picnic, never a Woodmen of the World parade with *papier-mâché* axes, never a murder, never a double murder, never a triple murder and suicide. It made him sick with resentment. Two weeks—and already his journalistic career was fated: he was to be Death's bookkeeper.

The position, it seemed to him, was the one drab spot in an otherwise colorful little world. His old-fashioned roll-top desk, in a far corner of the city room under a window so coated with grime that it was practically opaque, was depressing in its pitifully obvious age. Its pigeon-holes overflowed with red-inked death notices, carelessly tossed aside memorials to many long since with their God. None, he judged, had ever been thrown away, at least none since the Spanish-American War.

Morrison was, of course, old and gray and dusty-looking. Tate, glancing over his drooping frame, set him down as a fit type for the job. He looked feeble, on the verge of a complete collapse, perhaps. But people said (with what truth Tate could not learn) that he was the best obit man in Brooklyn. The report, at that time, stirred no envy in his heart. He saw only that Old Morrison was poor company and a miserable specimen of, and a disgrace to, the noble profession of journalism, and had never, so far as he could ascertain, covered even a summer festival in Prospect Park.

He never spoke. All day, from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, he worked, his head and shoulders nearly buried in the rising drifts of death notices, turning out obit after obit, all flawless, all admirably concise and accurate résumés of the late departed.

Tate's heart, though, was not here; it was down the middle of the room, where were the color and glamor of newspaper work. There gathered the reporters after press-time and ripped down high-blown reputations with a few, swift, sharp truths. There they punctured the balloons of fame, and scoffed, sneered, suspected, doubted everything everywhere. No man impressed them, nothing awed them. Cynical, clear-sighted, courageous young iconoclasts, they respected nothing, trusted nobody, believed scarcely as much as they saw with their own eyes. Tate thought that nowhere else could there be found, in one room, so many cultured men.

There, out there with them, was where he wanted to be. He longed for their society, envying and craving their mature, scholarly coigns of intellectual and politico-economic advantages. Everything they said, it seemed to him, corruscated with wit and erudition. Every positive, dogged statement glowed with keen perception and sound reason. Occasionally, at first, he tried to join them in their little gatherings. He attempted, but only once

or twice, to elevate his position to their level.

Silent and attentive usually, he listened to their discourses, to Police Headquarters Man Proctor on The Sex Problem in the Raymond Street Jail, to Supreme Court Man Andrews on Undefended Divorce Cases, to General News Man Carroll on The High Spots of Medieval Pornography, to Reese on Love in Denmark, to Head Office Boy Menger on Women That Have Known Me. And, often, to other liars and fakers.

Sometimes the conversation paused, rare occasions, and Tate made timid and futile efforts to hedge in. "Awfully funny kind of death today—" he'd begin, and somebody else, ignoring him, would break in to add an after-thought to a recently delivered homily. Another time: "Kind of a funny obit came in today—" he'd start, and Menger or Carroll would interrupt to recount a hitherto overlooked incident in his life. Tate varied his introduction, seeking initial words that would seize and hold their attention until he could get fairly under way with his comical deaths and obituaries, but nobody ever appeared to care to hear them and soon he gave it up.

Of journalism he felt he was learning nothing in the obit department. He was only casually interested in death, though it caused him some surprise to note how few ways there are of dying "natural" deaths in the newspapers. The most popular was "a complication of diseases," which was the cause attributed by Old Morrison when there was any doubt, or absolutely no doubt, as to the propriety of printing in a home newspaper the name of the specific malady.

Many died of pneumonia, a respectable, somewhat tragic, though not exclusive, way of passing out. More died of influenza, a bourgeois death. Shameless surviving relatives once admitted gastritis to have been the cause. Whenever it was hiccoughs, which was unexpectedly often the case, Tate gave the story to the city editor, who gener-

ally assigned someone to write a not altogether unfunny story about it. Such significant deaths as from anthrax, typhus, and the pest-house diseases also went to the city editor. Diabetes, intestinal troubles, and certain organic diseases were neither refined nor interesting; they nauseated Tate and he wondered why anybody should acknowledge them. Now and then the undertaker, who provided publicity for the remains as part of his services, failed to disclose the cause, and Tate, getting the spirit of the game, suspected the worst.

Eventually he began to look further than these red-inked death notices for the source of his work. He came on the human race, frail and mortal, dying off like flies, making him write paragraphs about them every hour of the day. He began to keep close track of the death rate. Mornings, coming to work in the subway, he sought the obituary column first in his paper, and his heart sank when it was crowded and grew lighter when it was short. He began, too, to regard the city's population with a heightened interest, and solicitude. He studied faces, seeking a hint as to the state of their health. Healthy faces cheered him. Thin, wan faces depressed him. They meant death, and work.

Of the faces in the office, only one distressed him, that of Emerson, the real-estate editor. Emerson, people said, was drinking himself to death. Tate tried to convince himself that this was not so, but Emerson's face was a serious handicap to any such illusion. This hurt Tate. It did not savor to him of the proper *esprit de corps* for the office. He bought no vacant lots, to give Emerson work; why, then, should Emerson die on him?

He glanced anxiously each morning over at the real-estate editor's desk, to see if he were still there. He mailed to him, anonymously, bottles of thirst cures. If Emerson drank them there were no signs of improvement in his appearance. Tate sent him also tracts on new remedies and sanitariums, but

Emerson, by all appearances, was set on dying; Tate found the mail matter in the wastebasket. He resented the real-estate editor's undecided health and showed it, plainly, to Emerson's puzzled surprise.

Then Old Morrison died and the next day, possibly as a reward for meritorious service, Tate was promoted to chief obit man.

III

THAT same day, almost in one dazzling second, Tate was transformed, completely. He became, you might say, another man. For, for the first time, he saw things clearly. A few words from the managing editor made him think it all out.

"Tate," Mr. Manners said, "we've had an eye on you. We believe that in putting you in Morrison's place we have got the right man in the right job. I have only this to say to you: maintain the same high standards which Morrison set. Morrison adhered to the *World-Intelligencer* motto, Accuracy First, as closely as any man we've ever had. He gave it an amplification which I think you would do well to adopt: For Every Death in Brooklyn, an Obituary; For Every Obituary, a Death. Follow that, Tate, and you won't be far wrong.

"And, mind, one thing: no faking. The *World-Intelligencer* never has and never will tolerate the faking of deaths."

Tate returned to his desk in a daze. Obituary Editor! Less than a year in the business, he was an editor! He was stirred. God, what a fool he had been, missing the really worthwhile side of his work! The obituary department was a highly important part of a newspaper—he saw it clearly for the first time. And he was its head, the Obituary Editor.

It came to him that he might become Morrison's successor in name as well as fact—the best obit man in Brooklyn.

He set in on the resolve at once. No later than the next day one might have

seen, had anyone been interested enough to note, which no one was, the transformation. That sullenness, that sulking discontent, that bitterness born of a sense of frustration, all disappeared, and in their place came energy, an insatiable appetite for work, a strange and strong hankering for deaths, the material out of which he was to build a name for himself.

He reached the office that day before eight. He collected the overnight death notices and put them in a neat little pile. He went through Morrison's desk and raked out every old notice he could lay his hands on. New deaths or none, he remembered grimly, and dropped them into a wastebasket. At eight-thirty he was ready to launch the new obit régime, a cleaner, swifter, more accurate obit régime than any paper had ever known. At eleven o'clock he had written obituaries for every notice in the office, and was telephoning to undertakers for more.

This was the first of many such days. His department did not become, as he had hoped, an advertised feature of the *World-Intelligencer*, but people in the office noticed its improvement and commented favorably. He kept himself alert for these reactions. He wanted, for one thing, to show the managing editor how wisely he had acted in his selection of Morrison's successor, and, for another, he was fired at last with the true spirit of the game, the consuming ardor that makes journalism the most stimulating of all professions.

But days passed, and weeks, and there came no sign from Mr. Manners that he was aware of any improvement in the obit department. For a while Tate made excuses for him, but presently he grew impatient. It was at the height of the best season for obits, December, and it was next to impossible not to note the paper's smooth, effortless pacing of the rapid sequence of deaths. He waited for a particularly meritorious instance and then left a note on Mr. Manners' desk.

"Mr. Manners," he wrote, "I believe you

will be interested in one of the obits printed yesterday, that of the late Irene Turner, 23, of 345 Harriman Avenue. Miss Turner died at 2.11 p. m., of a complication of diseases. A friend who knew I was Obituary Editor of the *World-Intelligencer* telephoned in time for me to get the obit in the 2.30 edition. Later I confirmed by phone that it was in print while the body was still warm. This is, so far as I have been able to learn, the first time the *World-Intelligencer* has carried an obituary before rigor mortis set in.

"Respectfully,
"TATE, Obituary Editor."

In signing his name with the title added he felt a glow of satisfaction. It seemed to lift him to the level of the sporting editor, the school editor, the Boy Scout editor, the radio editor, the book editor, the children's department editor, the Funny Face Puzzle Contest editor.

The elevation, though, did not mean his removal from the repertorial class. He thought of himself as at home in either, a sort of amphibious journalistic phenomenon, with faculties as much developed for the adventurous pursuit of a story as for the more sedate and scholarly business of editing, headlining, and wearing a green eyeshade. That so far he had won his spurs only as an editor was, he was sure, only because he had had no opportunity at the glamorous side. That opportunity would come; he had no doubt of it.

He thought of this coup when, gazing meditatively across the city room after press-time, he observed Reese, his stick swinging from his bent arm, leaving for the day. He thought of it as one of those achievements so personally brilliant that the Newspaper Club boys honored and identified them with the names of their sponsors—that Frank O'Malley story, that Irv Cobb story, that Harding Davis story . . . sagas of the craft.

IV

TATE achieved this culminating glory, but under circumstances which robbed it of most of its flattering excrescences. The Newspaper Club boys never

learned of "that Tate story." No one but himself ever knew of it, but he, in his heart, appreciates it.

Starved at times, so to speak, for deaths, the result of his swift, efficient work, he directed his attention toward individual prospects, particularly toward Emerson, whose condition began to show highly favorable aspects. Delegated to attend Morrison's funeral as flower-bearer for the office force, Emerson had steadied himself for the ordeal with a drink, and since then had not become at any time entirely sober. He came to work daily, thereby affording Tate opportunity to keep track of his decline, but it was evident to everybody that he was headed straight for The Dogs. There were signs innumerable, mostly tending to show an acute complication of locomotor ataxia and delirium tremens.

Because of his long and at times honorable service his developing eccentricities were overlooked, or at least tolerated. Tate watched eagerly, alert for the faintest sign of a complete collapse, yet scarcely daring to hope for a death in the office. Weeks passed. Tate became, as nothing happened, impatient with the real-estate editor for his stubborn constitution.

There was the time when, attempting to perform a feat of legerdemain, Emerson accidentally swallowed the managing editor's watch. Tate held his breath, confident that if the watch did not kill him the managing editor would. But the incident passed. There were other symptoms of disintegration—when Emerson, in a confused state, strode through the wrong door and plunged down the elevator shaft; when, on one of his worst days, he insisted that he was a goat and ate the cable editor's umbrella; when, on another bad day, he managed to slip into his columns a brief to the effect that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had purchased the Brooklyn Museum and intended to convert it into a comfort station for ghosts; none of which was true.

Thus one thing followed another and by the time Emerson did finally get the

gate, after standing on a desk in the middle of the city room and denying the deity of Wall Street, Tate's nerves were nearly frazzled.

Emerson came near to passing out of Tate's view after that, but, strangely enough, he continued to make spasmodic visits to the office and always mainly to see Tate, whose interest, though patently selfish, moved him to a kind of affection.

"When I die, Tate," he said once, "I'll try to make it around 10 a. m. That would suit you best, wouldn't it?"

Tate was moved.

"Yes," he said, and added, "Thanks, old man." For a moment he was inclined to regard Emerson in a new light, as a human and a friend. Here was that rare element, consideration. But quickly he stifled this feeling. "Business is business," he told himself. Newspaper work is like that.

Presently even these infrequent visits stopped. Tate, anxious at first, soon became frantic. Emerson's condition and probably early death had become of the greatest importance to him. In them, he felt, lay his Big Opportunity. He had other deaths, to be sure, scores of them, but they received little or no personal interest. They were names, gone with the printing of the paper. Emerson was a person, one that he could touch. He was dying, without question. The thought fascinated him, as much for the novelty of the fact as for the educational advantages it offered in his capacity of obit editor. He wanted to see Emerson die.

He telephoned everywhere Emerson might be. He had disappeared from his usual saloons. Assailed by thoughts of the man dead and his body undiscovered in some low out-of-the-way building, he tried the police and then began a canvass of the hospitals. Presently he found him. Emerson was at the Municipal Hospital, brought there by a garbage man who had fished him out of an ash-can in Brownsville. He was in a critical condition, his nerves slivered and raw with pain, his mind, such as it was, tottering. His death,

Tate was told, was a matter of days.

As soon as he could, Tate called at the hospital. The head nurse, with whom he had talked over the telephone, was right. Emerson was in his last illness; there was no mistaking it. Tate's first emotion, of horror, quickly gave way to exultation. The "story" in Emerson was now at hand. It demanded no therapeutic knowledge to foresee an early death. He returned to the office and wrote Emerson's obituary, marking it, "Hold for release."

He waited patiently, then, for the story to break. Each morning he telephoned the hospital and learned the patient's condition. Each afternoon, just before press-time, he called again. Emerson did not fail him; he declined rapidly.

A week later there was definite news. On the call in the morning he was told that Emerson had fallen into a coma, which it was doubtful that he could survive. The strait-jacket had been removed and two attendants were beside his cot to guard against further violence. Tate got out the obituary. It was correct in every detail except the hour of death, for which he had left a blank space.

At noon he called again. Emerson was no better. He was, if anything, worse. During a lucid moment he had kicked the head nurse in the face. The head nurse told Tate that he did not expect the patient to live until morning, especially after that kick.

At 2:15 o'clock, a quarter of an hour before press-time, Tate was rewarded. Emerson was dead. He had just passed out. He had had a convulsion, during which he had attacked both attendants, and then, his strength spent and his heart strained by the undue exertion, he had collapsed. Within a few minutes the attendants had signified his death by going through his trouser pockets for whatever cash had been overlooked by the night nurse.

Tate sent the obituary to the linotypers and then set out for the hospital. He felt hugely satisfied with himself. He had followed through the whole

story in a manner which he felt was beyond criticism. It was the kind of thing Reese or Proctor might have done. It was journalism. He had got results.

The head nurse had a fresh wound on his right cheek, where Emerson's heel had caught him, he said. Tate had a curiosity to look at the body. The head nurse, it seemed, was oddly reluctant to permit him. He tried, arguing from a tangent, to dissuade Tate, but the latter insisted. He had never seen a corpse. The sight of Emerson dead, he felt, was necessary to complete the experience. The nurse consented finally, with an awkwardly mumbled apology and explanation for the dead man's appearance.

"The patient was violent at times during the morning," he said, "and it was necessary at times to use force on him."

Tate understood when the nurse removed the sheet from Emerson's face. It was a field of blue bruises, ornamented here and there with recently washed lacerations. The nose was apparently broken, the forehead slashed in two places.

"You must have used an axe," he commented.

"No," the head nurse replied, "we seldom do that."

Tate sat down to think. He was greatly shaken by Emerson's condition, so much so that he scarcely noticed when the nurse, who had been shifting about uncomfortably, went out, leaving him alone with the body. The thing was horrible! Emerson dead, he found, he could think of as a friend. Inwardly he wept. The poor man, torn and racked and crazed by his affliction, had gone out hard. Sensitive for the first time to the meaning of death, Tate seemed to feel himself the cutting, pounding pain of that last fierce beating Emerson had taken. He shuddered and his eyes became wet. A tear fell. Poor Emerson!

Between the instant the tear left his eye and the instant it reached the pillow where Emerson's head lay, some-

thing occurred that almost served to draw it back to Tate's eye. Emerson moved. An eyelid fluttered. The lips parted, slowly, painfully, and the chest rose. The cadaver drew a deep breath.

Tate, seeing this thing, suddenly became dizzy. His hand grasped the bed to steady himself. His knees weakened, gave way, and he fell to a kneeling position. He was terrified. The thing had been so astoundingly unthought of. For a full moment he was virtually unconscious, his brain paralyzed. His head dropped forward and rested on the pillow beside Emerson's.

When presently his brain cleared he felt absurd. It had been an hallucination. It couldn't possibly have happened. Incredulously, half ashamed of himself, he laid his hand on Emerson's head and his fingers pressed the little pulse centers in front of the ears. They throbbed to his touch, faintly. Emerson was alive. Even as the thought flashed across his consciousness the man's lips moved. Tate leaned forward. The words, what proved to be his last words, came, barely audible:

"Yale . . . Yale . . . Yale . . . rah!"

The sound, the import of the words, flushed Tate with a revulsion of feeling. In a second he was ablaze with fury. It wasn't so much Emerson's college as it was that Emerson had betrayed him, and in the critical moment of his journalistic career, when he needed firm friends above all else. Emerson had given every evidence of death. He had even deceived the hospital people. He had, careless of the consequences, hypocritically represented himself as material for an obituary.

Emerson dead was human and a friend. Alive again, he was what he had been before—a stepping-stone to success. Apparently he could not be depended on in either capacity. Indeed, he scarcely seemed able to make up his own mind in which he wished to fail

more. He became to Tate, in that instant when he had shown life, the most hated person alive.

"Accuracy First!"

Emerson, possibly deliberately, had forced him into the position of seemingly faking a death. The obit was in print, the papers were on the street. Emerson, by a record that never before had known such an error, was, or should be, dead.

There was but one thing to do. Emerson's face was already badly scarred in a dozen places. One more or less mattered little. With a hasty glance at the door, he picked up a half-empty bottle of soothing syrup and cracked Emerson once across the head. Once was enough. Emerson passed out, beyond question.

Tate re-covered the face with the sheet, got his hat, and went downstairs. He waved his hand to the head nurse. The head nurse waved back, affably.

Tate crossed the street to a drugstore and entered the telephone booth. His heart again was light. He hummed while the operator rang his number. It might have been Reese or Proctor calling. It might have been Irv Cobb himself, so offhand and bored was his tone.

"S all right, Eddie," he said to the city editor. "Let 'er ride."

Reese would have used the same words.

"Let what ride?"

"Let the paper ride. Everything's all right on that Emerson story."

"Oh, that obit. Why, it's gone in. What's the idea?"

"Oh, nothing. I just thought I'd let you know everything was O.K."

A pause at the other end. Then: "Come in when you're sober."

Tate whistled as he left the store. As chance would have it, the store next door was a haberdasher's. A stack of sticks was in the window. Tate entered.



Fame

By Harold Seton

FAME has been defined by many persons in many ways. But seeking for a characteristically up-to-date pronouncement, the following carefully compiled list of individuals has been secured as a practical demonstration of what is included in the term:

Christopher Columbus, Mary Pickford, George Washington, Douglas Fairbanks, Napoleon Bonaparte, Charlie Chaplin, William Shakespeare, Lillian Gish, Abraham Lincoln, Richard Barthelmess, William the Conqueror, Harold Lloyd, Dante, Dorothy Gish, Moliere, Constance Talmadge, Socrates, Thomas Meighan, Plato, Gloria Swanson, Beethoven, Buster Keaton, Robespierre, Lon Chaney, Michelangelo, Rodolph Valentino, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Ramon Novarro, Nero, Elsie Ferguson, Homer, Nita Naldi, Marquis de La-

fayette, William Tell, Nazimova, Henry VIII, Dorothy Dalton, Chopin, William Penn, Florence Vidor, Peter Stuyvesant, Alice Terry, Benjamin Franklin, Barbara La Marr, Paul Revere, Betty Compson, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Charlemagne, Hope Hampton, Nathan Hale, Claire Windsor, Robert Fulton, Agnes Ayres, Ponce de Leon, Pearl White, Madame du Barry, Jack Holt, Nell Gwynne, Conrad Nagel, Betsy Ross, Milton Sills, Molly Pitcher, Queen Elizabeth, Tony Moreno, Theodore Roberts, Catherine the Great, Jackie Coogan, Duke of Wellington, D. W. Griffith, Oliver Cromwell, Erich von Stroheim, Marc Antony, Cecil B. de Mille, Alexander the Great, Adolph Zukor, Jesse Lasky, Mohammed, Bull Montana, Confucius, Ben Turpin. . . .



The Host

By Muna Lee

ANY is free to Happiness
Who has the pence to pay,
And many are feasted by Happiness
Whom grief would turn away.

Oh, I walk as one apart this night,
And proud in my heart am I,
For it's grief who ran and clung to me
And would not let me by.



The Suicide Expert

By Alfred B. Kuttner

"I AGREE with you." Doctor Beaurepaire rested his arms on the desk before him and leaned slightly forward as he addressed his visitor. He was a man of massive build whose every move and gesture suggested power and resourcefulness. His low but compelling voice blended harmoniously with the soothing atmosphere of his tastefully appointed study. The experience of many years as a nerve specialist and constant contact with every form of mental and moral abnormality, had taught him how to speak to his patients with conviction and authority.

"Life is not worth living. You are perfectly right," he said.

For a moment Arthur Winslow stared at him incredulously. He had not expected to find such a ready acceptance of his views.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Doctor," he answered, in a tone of evident relief. "Committing suicide is, after all, not a trivial matter."

"Certainly not," answered Doctor Beaurepaire, with an intonation which nevertheless seemed to dismiss the gravity of the subject. "But it is really very simple. The moment you no longer find life worth living, the only logical solution is to end it."

"I assure you, my dear Doctor," replied Winslow, "that my determination to commit suicide is not based upon any particular grievance against life. As you know, I have always been in the fortunate position of being able to satisfy all my wants or, in fact, to indulge any passing whim. The thing goes

deeper with me. I have tried life at its best and have found it wanting."

"Then your case is indeed perfect," exclaimed Doctor Beaurepaire enthusiastically. "Yours will be an ideal suicide."

II

THE Doctor was subjecting his patient to a close scrutiny. His practised eye rapidly checked off the more elaborate diagnosis of Arthur Winslow which he had already made that morning.

He saw before him a man whose entire body, as he lay sprawling in the easy chair facing the Doctor's desk, suggested complete mental and physical inertia. The naturally loose-jointed frame, the extreme pallor of the face, the premature furrows about the forehead, accentuated the effect. Arthur Winslow, not yet thirty-five, a traveled man of leisure, with a nature sensitive to beauty and the finer things of life, professed to be tired of everything that life had to offer. He wished to leave it, to be extinguished, to become one with the nothingness that awaits us, or to justify his ways to that inscrutable divinity which receives the eternal part of us and questions us more deeply than our mortal hearts can fathom. Why not, Doctor Beaurepaire pondered. Why should Winslow continue to encumber the earth? And why should he encourage such a man to linger on, perhaps to sneer at those who may falter but who never flinch on the long and arduous path of life? He was only an impediment.

"But might not my suicide be ascribed to a temporary mental derangement, a sudden fit of insanity?" asked Winslow hesitatingly. "I ask you both as an authority and as a friend." Winslow's voice trembled slightly.

"My dear Winslow, I beg you to dismiss such an absurd idea. I am fully prepared to give you a certificate of sanity, if that will reassure you."

"But the Coroner's jury—" interposed Winslow.

"Yes, their verdict will probably be that you committed suicide while insane. But they do not face the facts as you have faced them. The man on the street has an entirely irrational prejudice in favor of keeping the world populated. But after all," Doctor Beaurepaire added with a rather tantalizing smile, "you will no longer have to worry over what people may say about you."

Winslow eyed the Doctor for a few moments in silence. His face gradually assumed a cunning almost hostile expression, and when he spoke again his voice was sharp with the keen edge of malice.

"If you are so convinced of what you are saying, why haven't you committed suicide long ago?"

Doctor Beaurepaire answered with a blandness that made it appear as if he had entirely overlooked Winslow's mocking intonation.

"It has been quite accidental. I assure you. I have, so to speak, not had the time. You see I do not live for myself, I live for science."

"I have thrown over my illusions long ago," murmured Winslow, almost inaudibly.

III

"BESIDES," continued the Doctor, as if he were speaking to himself, "I manage, in a quite incidental way, to extract a few small pleasures from life. I appreciate good cooking, for instance, and an occasional bottle of mellow old wine. Above all I love the grace and charm which hovers about a handsome woman, as if to make us feel a little more at home in this hostile world."

"Why do you try to mock me with these shallow gratifications?" cried Winslow with a sudden passion. "You are a mere sensualist after all. A pretty woman's ankles are enough to upset your whole philosophy."

"You exaggerate my poor words," the Doctor answered calmly. "I was thinking of the harmless spell which a fresh young girl may cast upon us. But I suppose these things no longer interest you."

"Not in the slightest, I am done with life and all its mockeries."

"There is just one more question which I should like to ask you," said Doctor Beaurepaire. "Have you never been in love—I mean really in love?"

"Love!" exclaimed Winslow contemptuously, "don't talk to me of love."

"But surely," the Doctor persisted, "there must have been a time, before you fully understood the cruel deceptions of life, when you were interested in the other sex. Did you never feel yourself drawn to a woman, one who for a time at least gave you a fond illusion of love; some sweetheart of your early youth perhaps?"

"Oh, yes," Winslow broke in harshly, as if the subject were somehow unpleasant to him; "I made a fool of myself, if that is what you mean. Like everybody else, I suppose. She was the daughter of a neighbor of ours, in rather humble circumstances, not far from our family estate. You know, a country girl, sweet and simple and all that, and probably quite empty headed. She is undoubtedly married by this time and is busy raising a family."

Winslow spoke with a cruel and cynical sneer. He appeared to resent the introduction of this subject into the conversation. But it was again impossible to tell, from Doctor Beaurepaire's manner, whether he had failed to notice this change in Winslow's tone or whether he had once more decided to ignore it.

"Then she was in a way, your first love," he said gently. "Are you sure that you have put her entirely out of your life?"

"Absolutely and irrevocably, I assure you. I doubt if I would recognize her now if by chance I should meet her again."

Winslow rose angrily from his chair and started to take a few paces up and down the room.

"Then it is really hopeless," said Doctor Beaurepaire, with an amazing mixture of pity and impatience in his voice.

Winslow wheeled around swiftly, in time to catch the expression that was fading from the Doctor's face.

"Come now," he cried, "you didn't expect to catch me with such a piece of sentimentality about a sweet young girl? This is really too childish."

Doctor Beaurepaire had also risen from his chair.

"This has been a very pleasant discussion. But I have other patients waiting. Some of them are probably anxious to commit suicide too. I must not keep them waiting too long."

"Oh, indeed!" answered Winslow, not without a trace of disappointment in his voice. "Are you going to give them the same advice?"

"I must correct you. I have given you no advice. That would be unprofessional. I have merely said that I see no earthly objection to your killing yourself. But what I require from a suicide is seriousness; I have no patience with shams. Having decided that you want to die the only question is, how do you propose to do it?"

Doctor Beaurepaire assumed a professional air, as if he were about to write out a prescription. Winslow allowed himself to sink back limply into his easy-chair, looking for all the world as if a mere breath would be enough to dissolve him, like a seeded dandelion in the Autumn wind.

"I have thought of drowning myself," he said. "I know of a beautiful, quiet stream where the willows trail in the water; the meadows on either side are white with daisies now and the whip-poorwill is never silent."

Doctor Beaurepaire smiled indulgently: "Not as easy as you think. You

are entirely too romantic; drowning is nothing but a form of strangulation. And it may be days before you come to the surface again. Your body will be stiff and bloated and your final gasps will have distorted your features almost beyond recognition."

"I could hang myself," breathed Winslow.

"That would be worse. Your tongue, swollen and purple, will hang out of your mouth, and your eyes will be popping almost out of your head."

"How about some quick and subtle poison?" asked Winslow, not without an inward shudder at this picture of himself dangling at the end of a rope which the Doctor had so grewsomely drawn for him.

"There are many objections. Most poisons cause convulsions. An overdose of cocaine induces a state of acute depression; chloroform brings on severe stomach pains. Besides, poisons do not always work with equal certainty. You might be subjected to the most terrible disappointment."

Winslow eyed the Doctor with cold disdain. "None of these considerations really matter. You are trying to mock me again."

"Not at all," Doctor Beaurepaire replied. "In fact I have given your case more attention than you perhaps imagine. Your determination to commit suicide is the result of long and deliberate thought, not an act of sudden desperation. It expresses your philosophy of life and it will remain as your message to mankind, an inspiration to others. For that reason there must be nothing sordid about it, nothing disagreeable to the eye or to the imagination. In your case death itself must be a beautiful and convincing gesture."

IV

Doctor Beaurepaire paused. A sudden animation lit up Winslow's features. For the first time his voice had a ring of enthusiasm.

"How well you have understood me," he cried, "I see you have vision, you

have understanding. Your words have made me all the more eager for death. Only how, tell me how?"

"Listen while I explain. The recent war, has as you know, greatly added to our knowledge of poisonous gases. Men have perished but science has gained. We now have an almost perfect control of hundreds of poisonous gases that are as finely shaded as the voices of an organ in the hands of a master organist. We can combine every known toxic effect into a veritable symphony of death. Asphyxiation has become an art.

"Thus at one stroke we rob death both of its terrors and of its ugliness. We can administer gases which exhilarate while they benumb and soothe while they destroy. Modern research has recaptured the secret of those paradisiac poisons known to the ancients which they probably distilled from roots and mushrooms now long extinct.

"It is this form of death that I would recommend to you. I have a sealed chamber in my laboratory into which I can introduce these gases at will. There you will be able to die in a state of happiness such as you have never known. In comparison with the ecstasy which I can invoke in you, the dream of the opium smoker and the phantasies of the heroin addict pale into insignificance. It is only fitting that you should repudiate life at the very moment when it presents the greatest illusion of happiness. I am at your command. It is for you to fix the time."

"I accept your offer," cried Winslow with alacrity, as he jumped buoyantly to his feet. His manner was suddenly full of energy and determination. "You are indeed a benefactor of mankind. I shall show the world how to die. Millions will follow my example."

Winslow seized his hat and cane.

"My affairs can be wound up by tomorrow morning. I shall be at your laboratory at ten o'clock."

"That will suit me perfectly," the Doctor replied.

"Until tomorrow, then."

"At ten o'clock."

Doctor Beaurepaire pushed a button

under his desk for his attendant to escort Winslow from the room.

V

THE next person to enter the office belonged to the sex for which Doctor Beaurepaire's death-infatuated visitor had just expressed his utter disregard. She was a woman whose presumable approach to thirty—and only a very discriminating guess would have chanced so high a figure—gave her little reason to accuse nature of having been unkind to her. Only she seemed a trifle thin, though not without the suspicion that it was really a full figure unnaturally wasted away; and the beauty of her face, with its calm lines and wide, patient, brown eyes, had something wistful about it, something that suggested tears restrained by pride. With the door closed behind her, she stopped falteringly, as if expecting a welcome and a recognition to which she could hardly lay claim.

"I see you do not remember me," she began at last, only to be immediately interrupted by the Doctor.

"Wait a minute," he said, "I shall recall you presently. I have just had a rather curious patient, and my mind is still occupied with him."

His close scrutiny, so cruelly searching and yet so kindly intentioned, caused her no embarrassment. When he spoke it was as if he were reciting from the pages of an invisible diary.

"You are Alice Banton. You came to me about five years ago. At that time you were living in the country, just outside of Tuxedo Park, if I remember rightly. You were suffering from a very serious complaint, a case of hopeless love."

Reassured by this almost uncanny recognition, Alice Banton advanced to the center of the room and sat down in the same armchair which Winslow had just occupied.

"I was able to do very little for you," he continued, "and I am sorry to see that in these five years time and nature have also failed to bring you relief."

Alice Banton repressed an involuntary sign. "Yes, Doctor," she said, "I am still in love with him."

"I am sorry to hear it. I had hoped that when you came to see me again it would be to tell me that you had freed yourself from your infatuation. But I see only an aggravation of your original complaint. What have you been doing with yourself?"

"I have been waiting," she said quietly.

"And do you still live in the country?"

"Yes, I still have the little house which my father left me. My memories of his presence there are my only happiness now."

"But you never hear from him. Unless I am very much mistaken he has given no sign of any interest in you during all these five years."

A slight nod saved her the pain of putting her answer into words.

"But what if he had become entirely indifferent to you?"

"I should still go on loving him," Alice Banton replied in a voice that was low but unshakably resolute.

"To tell you the truth, Miss Banton, I think he must be either a scoundrel or a good-for-nothing."

"No, he is not bad. He is only thoughtless and spoiled. I know him. I know how wayward he is. Even as a boy he always used to delight in taking beautiful things and breaking them into pieces. But I am sure that life is teaching him, that some day he will learn to treasure the gifts that life has put into his hands. I know it. I know it."

Alice Banton, flushed and eager with the eloquence that poured out straight from her heart, stopped in sudden confusion lest even this impersonal confessor should see how deeply each word was crimsoned with a drop of her blood. But Doctor Beaurepaire, apparently oblivious, as if he were conducting an experiment in his laboratory, pierced her with another cruelty.

"But suppose he should die?"

"My hope of happiness would die with him, even if I survived," she answered quivering.

"I really do not see that I can do anything for you," resumed Doctor Beaurepaire after a pause. "Real love such as yours is nothing less than a form of madness. It certainly is quite as unresponsive to treatment as most of the insanities. Even psychoanalysis, which sometimes works wonders, can do nothing while the patient is possessed by this love madness. It can merely hasten the process of recovery in a person who has already broken the spell himself. I therefore know of no therapeutic measures that could help you. Nor can I bring your lover to you and make him love you against his will. There is only one other practical step. . . ."

"What is that?" Alice Banton asked with a pathetic eagerness which showed only too clearly how irrepressibly her hopes still soared upon the most perishable of wings.

"I am thinking only of you," replied Doctor Beaurepaire. "Cruel as it may sound, it might be your salvation to see your heedless lover lying dead before you. You have told me that you would love him even in death, and that you would never marry anyone else. But no one can foretell what the sanative powers of nature might accomplish, once the deadly irritant of his presence were removed. Your constitution, weakened though it is by your long love vigil, would survive the shock of his death, and I am confident that your common sense would soon triumph over the insanity of grief."

"Pray God that I may never see that day," exclaimed Alice Banton with a sweet and simple fervor. "My prayers shall shield him from death."

"At any rate," said Doctor Beaurepaire, as he handed her the prescription, "I want you here again tomorrow for further treatment. If you come about eleven o'clock, you will be just in time."

VI

PROMPTLY at the hour agreed upon Winslow presented himself at Doctor Beaurepaire's laboratory. As the Doc-

tor entered he rose gaily to meet him.

"You see I am on time, my dear philosopher of death," he cried. "This beautiful Spring morning has already put me into such a festive mood that I greatly doubt if you will have to exert much subtlety in mixing those liberating gases of yours. I shall find it easy to die."

Doctor Beaurepaire assented with a slight smile.

"I have no doubt of it. Have you completed all your worldly arrangements?"

"Yes, that did not take me long. Here is my undertaker's address, he has full instructions. And here also is my will. I have made a very liberal bequest in your favor in order that you may continue your researches in the science of euthanasia."

"That is very handsome of you. I shall give your name to the next gas I discover. But now let me lead you to the chamber."

The room in which Doctor Beaurepaire ushered Winslow was high and spacious. The smooth, windowless walls rose to a height of perhaps sixteen feet before they touched the curved molding that joined them to the ceiling. They were decorated with frescoes which reached from the floor to the apex. Two of the walls were done in a style somewhat reminiscent of Puvis de Chavannes, whose delightful murals in the Pantheon in Paris invite the appreciative traveler to linger a little longer in that gracious temple of the dead. Here poetic landscapes alternated with distant vistas whose delicate charm was enhanced by the elusive figures of nymphs and maidens painted shyly into a foreground of rocks and trees.

One of the other walls represented a simple rustic scene which seemed immediately familiar because it so truly pictured the very essence of the charm of country life. An unpretentious little cottage, tucked snugly away behind a tree of generous spread, stood midway between a gently sloping meadow and a chattering, winding brook. In front of the house, with a low friendly fence

and gate enclosing it, was a modest garden, eloquent of the owner's small means or perhaps even smaller leisure, which nevertheless proudly showed its modest splendor of lilac bush and patch of violets. With such simple means the painter had unerringly evoked a picture of life at its loveliest.

The fourth wall showed a more experimental turn of the imagination. This time the artist had evidently tried to use to the full those new resources which modern art has placed at the disposal of the courageous innovator. Here the abstract battled with the concrete, and stark, rugged forms clashed with wilful formlessness, so that the total effect was often confused even though the attention might be hauntingly arrested. The impression upon the spectator would therefore be highly suggestive or irritatingly bizarre, even without the artificial stimulation of the toxic gases under which it was soon to be viewed by Winslow.

The ceiling, on the other hand, had been treated as a problem in pure design in which a pattern of concentric circles was employed, not without occasional deviations, in order to give a combined effect of depth and height such as we sometimes feel when we gaze for a long time into the tantalizing blue of a cloudless sky. Somewhere in this pattern, and it was really difficult to say exactly where because it met the eye from all directions, the figure of a young girl had been introduced. She was entirely nude, but her nakedness was so innocent and so disarming that it was unimaginable to think of her as having ever looked upon the face of a man.

A system of indirect lighting, which diffused the light everywhere with equal brilliancy, served to enhance the harmony of this unique decorative scheme. The walls blended so imperceptibly into the ceiling, the lines formed by the corners of the room were so skilfully blurred, and the perspective had been so cunningly deepened, that the actual confines of the chamber melted away before the eye. Endless vistas seemed to open and a sense

of the infinite hovered in the air.

To such a happy effect a nature as sensitive as Winslow's could not fail to respond.

"What a delightful antechamber to death," he exclaimed enthusiastically. "It makes me feel as if I were already somewhere in the suburbs of eternity. Surely you are to be thanked for such a pleasant foretaste. I know that painting is one of your hobbies."

"The planning of this room has given me a great deal of pleasure," replied Doctor Beaurepaire, "and I am glad that it meets with your approval. That horn up there" he added, pointing toward the ceiling, "is an orchestral reproducer of the latest pattern. Unfortunately we neglected to decide upon a musical program yesterday afternoon. You will therefore have to put up with my selections."

"They cannot fail to be excellent," said Winslow, "It will be an added pleasure to die to music. And that little receiver up there, isn't that a dictagraph?"

"Yes, a stenographer at the other end will be prepared to take down your utterances. She will be able to hear you but not to communicate with you. I want you to feel entirely free to express yourself. You may be moved to restate your philosophy of life in terms more eloquent than any you have ever found before. Knowing you as I do I feel that your final words will be of utmost value to the world. I shall have them published in suitable form after your death."

The Doctor pointed to a couch and a small table set for one. These were the only pieces of furniture in the room.

"Over there you will find some iced champagne and a few rare delicacies for your palate. And now, if you have no further wishes. I shall leave you. As soon as I close the door behind me the gases will begin to flood the room. I bid you a hearty farewell."

"Good-bye, my dear Doctor Beaurepaire," exclaimed Winslow with unaffected simplicity. "And a thousand thanks! I hardly have to tell you that."

The two men shook hands warmly.

"I wish you every happiness," said Doctor Beaurepaire gravely, as he closed the heavy iron door noiselessly behind him.

VII

WINSLOW paced up and down the room exultantly.

"At last, at last," he exclaimed, involuntarily talking aloud, "I am master of my own destiny."

He started at finding his own words immediately thrown back at him, as if somebody had repeated them syllable by syllable. By some curious architectural freak the room gave back a perfect echo, though in so low a pitch that Winslow had failed to notice it while conversing with Doctor Beaurepaire. But now there was something subtly disconcerting in the hollow, ghostlike sound of his own voice.

"How easy it has been," he reflected, without, however giving utterance to his thoughts. "I have decreed my own death and am here to welcome it. How strange that people should stand in such abject terror of what is really their greatest happiness."

He sat down upon the couch.

"It is not even thrilling," he ran on. "Here I am in the very presence of death."

"The very presence of death." Again the echo of his own voice came floating back to him.

Once more the room was filled with a curious stillness. Winslow felt like an explorer among the monuments of forgotten kings who suddenly bursts into the death chamber in the very heart of a pyramid, and stands rebuked before the invisible silence which he has so rudely violated.

In his elation of the morning Winslow had entirely forgotten to take any breakfast. As his eyes fell upon the table the sight of food and wine aroused his appetite. He helped himself to some caviar and poured out a glass of champagne. What a vintage! As he sat sipping the wine, Winslow

noticed that the whole room was flooded with music; a *rondeau* by Kreisler, as only that great artist could play it. So faithful was the reproduction that it seemed as if Kreisler and his whole orchestra were present.

Winslow began to feel himself in a state of acute physical well-being. A tingling sensation was flowing through his whole body until every nerve seemed to quiver with energy. It was a pleasure to make his muscles roll lithe and elastic under his skin, to feel his sinews tense and vibrant to his control. Could this be entirely the effect of the wine, or was some otherwise intangible gas already beginning to affect him? Never before had he felt so full of the sheer animal joy of living.

A sudden memory flashed through his mind. He was recalling an eventful day of his youth when at last he had dared to dive from the high rock overhanging the secret pool where, as a boy, he had learned to swim. He saw himself again standing in the mottled sunlight of the woody bank, his whole body still tingling with the shock of the plunge and the chill of the child spring that bubbled up from the bottom of the pool. How proud and happy he had been!

The surcharge of physical energy in every limb of his body was too great to let him sit still. He found himself pacing up and down the room with great, buoyant strides.

For some time the invisible orchestra had been playing a stirring march. Gradually it changed, going over at first into a Hungarian rhapsody whose wild and romantic strains are so well calculated to stir the blood, and finally becoming altogether sensuous in its appeal. Winslow took another sip of wine. The rare bouquet of the champagne seemed suddenly to have spread over the whole room. The air was laden with a happy mixture of the most delicious perfumes which would soon have proved too overpowering had they not been subtly varied, as if the fragrance of every flower and herb in the world were being wafted through the room.

This insidious combination of music, wine, and perfume could not fail to have a powerful effect upon Winslow. His imagination rapidly took a more sensuous turn, wrapt as he was in that tremulous, amorous state which is youth's garden charm before the emotions ripen into full-blown love. . . .

He was no longer conscious of being confined in a room. The walls had suddenly given way, revealing tempting vistas of almost magical beauty. He walked boldly on and soon found himself in a glade of slim, white birch trees. How warmly the sun filtered through the green leaves, how restfully the clear blue of the cloudless sky peeped through the trees in the ever alluring stretches of woodland! Nor was he any longer alone. Who were those elusive, laughing girls who danced so gaily on the turf, their white limbs gleaming through thin gauze? And those lovers, strolling arm in arm, or reclining on the ground all about him. He must tread softly lest he disturb them in their innocent abandon.

Or was he by some strange spell walking unobserved? Did no one there notice him? Could he be moving about amid these charming scenes and yet not be a part of them? Why was he out-cast?

Ah! A goblet full of wine left by a reveller. He drained it at one gulp and dashed it upon a rock. Did no one hear the crash, or had that distant music of flutes and horns out-echoed it? But he would not be cheated. Now to snatch a girl in his arms; he would soon make her respond to his ardor! . . .

Winslow's feet grated upon the broken glass of champagne that had fallen from his hand as he stumbled dizzily upon the couch. The shock brought back a sudden realization of his surroundings. That wine had bedevilled him into peopling the painted scene before him with the figments of dreams. He recognized these phantasies for what they were—the crude imaginings of an amorous boy.

Let love wait. The energy that was vitalizing him now in every fibre of his

body, filled his mind with weightier matters.

VIII

THOSE grandiose strains from Beethoven's ninth symphony were more attuned to his new mood. He saw the world before him and gloried in his power to bend it to his will. With this combined mental and physical stimulus to urge him on, there was nothing he could not master. What did it matter if he were not yet quite sure where to take hold? In that bright pageant of his ambitions which now unrolled before his eyes in delirious rhythm there was no room for doubt or hesitation.

Thus subtly Winslow's moods changed. In his bewildered brain, whipped into frenzied activity by an unnatural and deadly intoxication, dreams of love and ambition alternated in rapid succession. The effect of the gases was straining him to the breaking point. His whole nervous system was being exhausted by this artificial concentration of a lifetime of hope and energy into the space of a few minutes. His burning imagination was wasting away his brain cells at such a rate that his heart was racing itself to death in a vain attempt to keep his head supplied with blood. As yet his mind failed to register this exhaustion. The more closely he approached death the more he felt crowned with the glory of life in the blood heat of youth.

Again those figures of the birchen glade began to dance about him. But now their actions were growing more abandoned. Those laughing lips, those glistening arms, those lovely white contours. And from up there, out of the dizzy sky, a super-fleshly radiance beamed down upon him like a revelation. Was not that someone breathing upon his cheek? Yes, it was love, the very breath of life!

Once more the figures vanished from his sight. But wait, one face remained. How sweetly familiar those features seemed. Was that enduring look of love for him? How strange that she

should linger. Where had the others fled? Had they dissolved and melted into her? . . . No matter; she was there. She alone was real. . . .

Now he knew where he was. This was her garden. He recognized her roses on the hedge and the small white house half smothered in the lilac bushes. She was still living there. She was waiting for him, there by the window, watching the road. He had but to bend back the bushes and call her name. . . .

What a fool he had been! He had wasted himself and his talents. He had wandered about in the world like a spendthrift, frittering away his time. And now he had nothing to show for it, nothing to show to her, for her to praise. But she would forgive, she would understand. And it was not too late.

And to think that so often he had almost despaired. He had been ready to give up before he had really begun. Why, he had recently met a doctor, a fellow with a strange philosophical jargon, who had tried to convince him that life was not worth living! He had almost believed the old quack!

But now he knew what to do. She must not find him here now. He would go away quickly, before she came out and saw him. He must hurry back to the sweltering, toiling city, and match himself against the world. It would not take him long to get on his feet. Quickly, out through the garden gate.

He reached for the latch. His hand touched cold metal. The latch must be on the other side of the gate. Again his hand came into contact with steel. His fingers wandered gropingly over the smooth, over-lapping edge of a heavy iron door.

He knocked upon the door. Again, louder, and again. He beat upon it with his fists. His brain seemed on fire. A fit of trembling shook him violently. . . . Slowly he remembered. "Doctor Beaurepaire! Doctor Beaurepaire!"

His voice re-echoed vainly through the death-like stillness of the room.

Gathering all his strength, he hurled his body against the door. The impact threw him back with bruised shoulders. Again he hammered upon it with his fists.

"For God's sake, let me out."

He tried to get his nails beneath the crack of the door and ripped them almost to the roots. He clawed at the door with bloody fingers.

"Help! Help!" he cried with bursting lungs.

Again the echo mocked him.

Winslow now ran rapidly along the four walls of the room, beating and kicking them with hands and feet. Everywhere a dull, solid thud testified to their thickness. Again he attacked the door. He cleared the table with a sweep of his hand and lifted it up over his head to use as a battering ram. Under the fury of his assault the table splintered in his hands. He stopped, swaying and giddy, with his muscles wrenched and stiffening. A shiver ran through him. He felt a cold sweat breaking out over his body. . . .

The music was still playing. That accursed horn up there was flooding the room with the strains of some wild improvisation. He must stop it before it drove him crazy. With almost superhuman strength he leaped high into the air in a vain effort to tear it down. It was just out of his reach. A second attempt brought him to the floor in a heap.

He lay there for a moment, unable to rise. His eyes stared blankly at the fourth side of the room. Those phantastic shapes, those broken, troubled forms, those clashing, dissonant colors, seemed suddenly to have come to life.

For out of those small, grated vents up there, cunningly concealed in the painted ceiling, invisible death was pouring down upon him. Winslow saw clearly now. He had fallen into the hands of a scientific maniac who was sacrificing him to an insane idea! He was being coldly murdered, without a chance to fight back.

Yet surely that fiend could hear him. Was there not the dictograph? At this

very moment he was probably listening at the other end, gloating over the agonies of his victim.

Winslow staggered to his feet, gathering his fast ebbing strength. This time he threw his voice straight at the dictograph transmitter.

"For God's sake, have pity. You are killing me."

In that ghastly chamber of death, with its painted mockeries of life, his voice echoed in vain. Was he then really doomed to die, now when love and ambition called him, when for the first time he knew the priceless gift of life? And what was this sudden drowsiness that assailed him?—What terrible weights pressed down his eyelids?

"No, no! I want to live. Give me life! Life!"

VII

"THAT will do," said Doctor Beaurepaire, turning to his assistant. He was sitting in the small control room of his laboratory before an elaborate keyboard. The assistant pulled a lever and screwed down several valves.

"Now open the ventilators and turn on the oxygen."

"What antidote shall we use?" inquired the assistant.

"Follow up the oxygen with a mild dose of laughing gas," said Doctor Beaurepaire. "We must bring him to with a smile on his face."

He turned to his secretary.

"Where did you leave Miss Banton?"

"She is sitting down in the hall."

"Alone?"

"Yes; I did not let anybody else in this morning, according to your instruction," the secretary replied.

"Very good," said Doctor Beaurepaire, "then Mr. Winslow is bound to run into her on his way out. He has already recovered from the effect of the gases."

Dortor Beaurepaire touched a spring which automatically threw open the heavy iron door of the gas chamber.

"Those two lovers must not be disturbed," he added with a gentle smile.

Premonition

By Elizabeth J. Coatsworth

THEY did not know that happiness had been theirs
Until they were forever past the wall.
Eden was never Eden of their dreams
Before the disillusionment of the Fall.

And now joy knows itself by this one sign:
That even in the fulness of its state
The pounding heart beats tremulous to hear
Somewhere, far off, the clicking of a gate.

A WOMAN doesn't object to a man with a lot of go in him—provided she goes with him.

A WOMAN'S mind is something she uses to guess with.

A WOMAN is never so disappointed as when she orders a man to behave and—he obeys.

"IF sinners entice thee, consent not"—but make a note of the address for future use.

A WOMAN will pardon cruelty and injustice, never indifference.

A HUSBAND'S faults are like the spots on the sun. It's a great pity they are there; but if you try to remove them, you'll only succeed in burning your own fingers.

PLAIN women are often jealous of their husbands. Beautiful women seldom are. They are too much occupied in being jealous of other women's husbands.

A WOMAN who tells the truth about her age, will tell the truth about anything.

NEVER interrupt a man when he prays, curses or kisses.

WORSE things may happen to a man whose wife runs away. She may come back.

S.S.—Mar.—6—

Kelly

By J. T. Le Blanc

I

I MET Kelly in Progresso. What delicate irony led someone to call the place Progresso! A flattened cluster of pink, pale blue and green buildings that baked in the tropical sun. It lay in the elbow of a curving bay as though it had barely frustrated an attempt, by the land, to scoop it off into the ocean. The wavering heat rays gave grotesque unreal outlines to the houses, streets and lounging figures. Progresso seemed to be continually shaking from a "bad day" of malaria. Were God old-fashioned and believed in cupping and blood-letting to relieve the world of its bad humors, He would apply the celestial leech at Progresso. Its one touch of the spiritual was the Southern Cross that looked down on the place at night. Few were the people who went there and fewer still the ones that left.

II

I HAD dropped in at Wah Sing's, attracted by his window display. Wah Sing called himself an importing merchant, but everyone knew that his shop was a place where thieves disposed of their hauls, and gentlemen, temporarily embarrassed financially came to receive loans on sundry articles of value. One could buy there anything from bacon to bombs, cocaine to cameras. His window at the time contained a handsome gold-embroidered saddle, hand tooled, a gold mounted six-shooter, a collection of quirts, horsehair bridles, a few phials of cocaine and morphine, and a large envelope of "marihuana."

82

It was the last that attracted me, this strange weed that, rolled into a cigarette and smoked, drives the smoker insane. Such a powerful drug in the proper dose might have some valuable therapeutic effect. Our medical men seem to be ignorant of its existence and I desired a sample. True the sale of cocaine, morphine and marihuana were prohibited by law, but after all the law in Progresso is only slightly annoying, sometimes entertaining, and gives employment to a group of worthy citizens that would otherwise be idle.

As I entered I noticed that Wah Sing had a client. They had just completed the bargain whereby Wah Sing received a heavy pair of silver-mounted spurs in exchange for ten pesos. The place was dimly lighted by flickering kerosene lamps, and I was just able to discern that the customer was tall, lean, bow legged, and crowned by a broad sweeping Stetson hat of the "five gallon" variety.

Wah Sing spoke Spanish with a decided counterpoint of Chinese. I spoke it scarcely at all. The result was that before I could adequately explain my wants, he grew so excited that he flew into pure Chinese and I gave up all hope of getting a sample of the weed. I had forgotten the other occupant of the room, and I gave an involuntary start when I felt a slight touch on my sleeve and a low mellow voice said in English:

"Brother, I guess you're a gringo 'n I'm shore glad t' see you if y' are. Just tell me what you want, 'n leave it to me t' bulldog this heathen."

I explained my desires and there followed a sharp discussion in staccato

Spanish that ended with my friend crashing his fist down on the counter and grinding out a word between his teeth that sounded like "*cavronnè*." The Chinaman meekly walked to the window and with a sallow, half apologetic smile handed me the envelope of marihuana. When I offered to pay, my friend waved the money aside and with a slight bow asked me to accept the stuff as a gift from Wah Sing with his compliments.

Though at the time, I had not enjoyed the boon of being exposed to Emily Post's etiquette, my guardian angel, if you will, whispered in my ear that the occasion demanded the proffer of liquid refreshment. I invited my friend to "lift one." He accepted and we headed for the nearest *cantina*.

III

LATER I came to know him comparatively well. I say that with reservations, because in the tropics, one does not press an acquaintance for details of the past. He said his name was Kelly. It might have been. Tall, rangy, dressed in sombrero, silk neckerchief, tan shirt, and drill trousers tucked into long high-heeled riding boots, he walked with an unsteady motion and a distinct list to the right. On this side in a leather holster of the Mexican type, he carried a Colt .45 with a large carved ivory grip. Somehow I never shook off the impression that he was just on the point of drawing the thing, and that he leaned over when he walked so that his hand was nearer the gun. I never saw him without it.

His hair was coarse, unbrushed, but with a natural part and rusty in color. His face was long and narrow; high-bridged nose, high cheek bones, heavy lips, clean-cut chin . . . angles piled on angles. It made me think of some complex crystal form. Tanned and wrinkled by sun, wind and rain, he showed years of life in the open. How many, I could not guess. He seldom smiled, but when he did, thousands of

wrinkles sprang into being and chased one another over his face. Fascinated I watched their play, like the flames in an open fire. His eyes were pale blue and seemed to be always moist. One felt that at one time they were good deep blue eyes, but of late had become deliquescent and were gradually melting away to finally become formless daubs. His voice was low, full, and mellow and when we talked together, no matter what the subject this low quality made me feel that our conversation was strictly private.

He drank everything he could get but showed a distinct preference for *tequila*. He smoked horrible tobacco rolled in corn husks, and often I thanked the gods that we talked and smoked in the open air. He was always just about to receive a large draft from somewhere. It never came.

Early I found that he would not accept money. What he occupied himself with, I never knew. We met at all hours. Quiet, hard, mysterious, somewhat brutish, somewhat boyish yet seemingly prematurely old, cynical, yet underneath it all an exaggerated strain of sentiment, and above all, pathetic. That was . . . Kelly.

IV

It was one of those quiet, languid evenings that in the tropics a stranger alternately curses and praises. Like a woman with vicarious appetites one longs for something . . . something vague and infinite . . . a white face, a taxicab, ice cream, a symphony orchestra, corned beef, a barber shop, even synthetic whisky. Homesickness hovers near.

I sat at a table in the open *portales* on the square. The air was heavy and sweet with the scent of the tropical blooms that literally banked the place. *Servientes* clattered by in their wooden sandals. Now and then the air trembled with the piercing chatter of the blackbirds roosting in the palm trees. It sounded curiously out of place and irri-

tated me. Damn the blackbirds. A splash of light struck the street from the door of a *cantina* across the square and the deep-throated notes of a marimba floated out in a wild gypsy-like bolero. Soon, as though the dancers were tired and had stopped to rest, it changed to a crooning waltz in split rhythm.

I leaned back and let my thoughts drift. I thought of Strauss. He wrote with a simple rhythm. One waltzed a Strauss waltz in heavy brogans . . . like this . . . one—two—three . . . one—two—three . . . with a full stomach. But here was a more intricate music. The accent beats were not prominent. It was danced by only those with a fine sense of rhythm and the easy grace of an animal. Progreso could have been worse . . . the Eden of easy philosophy . . . the land of the *mañana* that never comes . . . soft music . . . flowers . . . dreams . . . and possibly romance. *Quien sabe?* . . .

"*Hola Doc!* Come to!" came from a lank shape as it slipped into a chair opposite me.

"Well how's my friend Kelly this fine evening?" said I, waving to the *mozo* for a bottle of *tequila*.

"Rotten Doc, thanks," he grunted, hitching himself closer to the table. "I'm as limber as a yard of tripe. Damn bum country this . . . everything totes a sting . . . guess I got a touch of *paludismo*."

A bottle was deposited on the table at Kelly's elbow.

"Cinch up a bit, Kelly, old timer," I suggested. "You've been seeing the scorpions and missing the butterflies. Get together with your old friend John R. Tequila. Maybe that will help."

"Guess you're right, Doc. I'm kinda off my feed tonight. 'S this damn God-forsaken country. Gets me now and then . . . 'sall right for greasers but no place for white men." He spoke in spurts between large gulps of the fiery liquor.

We sat in silence for a time. Kelly puffed on one of his corn husk ciga-

rettes, the smoke curling around the brim of his sombrero. Between puffs he sucked pieces of lime dipped in salt that were furnished with the *tequila*. The music of the *cantina* had ceased, the blackbirds had quit for the day, the loungers had fallen asleep or gone home . . . the square was quiet. I sipped at a glass of port with crushed mint leaves and said nothing. The level in Kelly's bottle dropped lower and lower. I marveled at the power of the human machine to react to strange and unexpected changes in its environment. Here was a stomach successfully fending off the distillate of desert cacti.

Kelly looked at me. His eyes seemed more watery than usual. A feeble friendly sort of smile flickered across his face.

"You're a good ol' hoss, Doc, dam' 'f you ain't," he ventured in an embarrassed self-conscious way. "Guess you've often wondered what I'm doin' down thisaway?"

I made no answer. He refilled his glass, tossed it off with a shiver and folded his arms on the table.

"Well, I'll tell you," he continued, "I'm here 'cause I ain't got the nerve to be anywhere else. Just think Doc, I just got enough *guts* to live in Progreso. If I had any less I'd be out in the jungle with the rest of the monkeys. Aw, hell!"

He stopped and looked off into the darkness. I could think of nothing to say so I nodded for another bottle. I knew Kelly was broke, because when he had money he insisted on buying the drinks. He did not notice the new bottle and absently spilled the liquor over the table in filling his glass.

"Doc, you're a real *hombre*," he said when the fire in his throat permitted. "You don't talk too much. Most men talk too damn much. You've been good t' me, Doc, 'n tonight I feel kinda loco 'n queer 'n somehow I feel I ain't dealin' off th' top of th' deck with you. You don't know what kind of a game you set into when you hooked up to me.

You don't know who I am, ner what I am. I might be a bad *hombre*?"

He looked at me intently and I returned his gaze with a smile.

"Well . . . by God I am!" he said.

He leaned further over the table and spoke so low that it was almost a whisper. "Doc . . . I killed a human bein'. . . Hear me, Doc? . . . not a greaser ner a hoss thief . . . but a human bein'."

He paused as though waiting for me to show some signs of alarm or astonishment. When none appeared he smiled as though a doubt in his mind had been settled.

"Doc, I had a reason, 'n a good one, too. Maybe you won't think I'm such a bum, when I tell you that he took away the only thing . . . the only thing, Doc . . . that I ever loved."

He seemed deeply moved. His words became almost inaudible and he said the last as one says a prayer. His knuckles gleamed white on the back of his clenched hands . . . hands dotted with large freckles and separate bristles of rusty colored hair. Several drinks of *tequila* went where all good drinks eventually go. He seemed more mentally alert. With a nervous motion he pushed his sombrero to the back of his head. His forehead was unusually white in contrast to his tanned face and I noticed that it was beaded with sweat, though the night was not warm. He relaxed and went on in an even tone.

"I won't tell you where it all happened, Doc, cause it doesn't make any difference. Me 'n my brother had as fine a ranch as there was, left to us when th' ol' man died. I was a fair critter, as punchers go, not too good ner not too bad. Didn't care 'specially 'bout dyin' 'n didn't care much 'bout livin'. Then I crossed trails with Daisy."

He stopped and drummed on the table with his long bony fingers.

"Daisy was a pure bred single footer as neat as y' ever clapped an eye on.

She opened a dressmakin' shop in th' little town, 'n all the leather pullers fer miles aroun' buzzed her. Somehow, Doc, I couldn't go bustin' up to her in th' open, so I sorta held my fire. I guess this kinda 'tracted her attention 'n so she cut me outa th' herd. From then on we rode closer n' closer. I give her a little chestnut mare, 'n we used t' ride together. I tell ya, Doc, when she wrapped her legs aroun' that hoss, she just rode like she belonged there. She had one of them brown ridin' suits with pants, 'n fixed her hair kinda funny. Damn! Doc, she was easy to aim at!"

His eyes lit up and he tossed off two full glasses as if he were silently toasting a memory.

"Well, she finally married me, 'n it was just like I married an angel, Doc, she was that fine, 'n spooky kinda, 'n so far above a hossy smellin' galoot like me. I never did understand her. She'd do th' damdest things. But 'twas all O. K. with me, Doc. I taught her how t' shoot but she wouldn't shoot nothin' but tin cans. She couldn't bear t' hurt a jackrabbit. Women are funny, Doc. She couldn't hurt a jack, that was no kin t' her at all, but she could hurt people, 'n a damn sight worse, too. Th' forty-five either gets the jack quick, 'r it misses him. He don't suffer, 'n have t' leave his hole on the pra'rie 'n live with mountain lions. But hell, Doc, I worshipped her like these greasers worship their whittled out wooden gods. I guess my not understandin' was th' cause of me loosin'. I jest nacherally set in on a game where I didn't even know th' pictures on th' cards. But brother, I was tryin' . . . tryin' like hell."

He fished out a corn husk cigarette from his breast pocket, lit it and blew a long graceful plume of smoke out into the darkness.

"Fer a weddin' present, I rode all th' way to San Antone 'n got her th' finest set of toilet tools they had, solid silver 'n all done up in a hide case. She was a real lady 'n needed the outfit, 'n

th' best wasn't good enough fer her. Doc, we was shore happy . . . shore happy."

He coughed and wiped his lips with the back of his hand.

"But 'twas too much luck fer me. 'Twas too good t' last. . . . A young high-steppin' buckaroo drifted in as night clerk at th' hotel. He was a slick gent and smooth with his talk, 'n on th' sly he begins t' ride herd on Daisy. I didn't know nothin' 'bout it ontill 'twas too late. One night I come in from th' brandin' gang t' find a note from Daisy sayin' she had hit th' trail . . . 'n Doc . . . Doc . . . she wished me luck!"

Without any apparent change in his expression or voice, two large tears welled up out of his eyes and darted down his cheeks to splash on the back of his hand. His voice took on a cold quality that I had never heard before as he continued.

"I found out from one of th' boys, that they had headed fer th' next town 'n I lit out. I didn't have anything special in mind. I didn't want to harm him, 'n I didn't want Daisy back. I guess I jest couldn't think of anything else t' do. I got there at dusk 'n I went straight t' th' hotel. Daisy's mare was in th' shed with another hoss, both hard ridden. I walked in where th' desk is but there was nobody there, so I pushed open th' swingin' doors into th' bar. Right before me sittin' at a table by hisself, was the damn dirty polecat that caused my trouble. Doc, fer a minute I had brandin' irons in my brains. . . .

"I pulled, 'n I plugged him, Doc. I was that opset that I plugged him square between th' eyes when I was aiming fer the dimple in his chin. He was plugged right. Jes gave a little sigh kinda, looked tired, 'n slumped for'ard on th' table. Doc, did y' ever see one plugged right? They don't grab their collar 'n squirm aroun' in a fit like these hombres in th' movies. No sreee they don't. They jes stop what they're doin', Doc. That's it, they jes stop what they're doin'."

His voice trailed off. The liquor

seemed to be getting the better of him. He pulled himself together and took another large drink.

"Well, he havin' no gun, 'n not puttin' up a fight there wasn't much fer me t' do but burn up th' trail fer th' border. But before I left I stopped at th' ranch t' say goo' bye t' my brother. Damn fine hombre, my brother. You'd like him, Doc. Her room was jest as she left it, 'n it seemed like I wanted a soovenir so I took th' case of toilet tools." He poured out with an unsteady hand the last of the second bottle.

"Y' know, Doc, them tools somehow remind me of Daisy 'n I've always kept them, through thick 'n thin. They're at my shakedown now. They're so fine, 'n purty, 'n there's so many of them little irons that I don't understan', 'n I'm most afraid t' touch them. 'N when I feel lonesome like tonight, Doc, I go 'n get them out, 'n look at them, 'n wonder what they mean . . . 'n think of Daisy. I'd a gone t' hell fer that little girl, Doc. Think I'll go home, now, 'n look at them."

He stumbled to his feet. "*Si, hombre . . . si, hombre . . .* think I'll go home and set up with Daisy. 'Night, Doc."

He lurched off into the darkness and his words came drifting back on the still night air:

"Yes, sir, I'd a gone t' hell fer that little girl."

V

It was about ten o'clock that evening that I received a note saying that one of Señora Rosa's young ladies at the Casa Blanca was suffering from what was believed to be yellow fever and would I be so kind as to come at once and may God protect me on the journey and keep the way smooth.

The Casa Blanca was a place that señoritas never even thought of, and old men referred to it with a twinkle in their eye. It was on the extreme edge of the so-called *Zona de Tolerancia*.

As the night was so perfect I decided

to walk and in a short time arrived at the Casa Blanca. A servant admitted me to a brilliantly lighted parlor filled with gaudy hangings and porcelain images of cats, and dogs. This opened into a second parlor and through the beaded hangings across the doorway I was much surprised to see my friend Kelly. He was seated at a small table, a bottle of *habanero* in one hand, the other resting on the bare shoulder of a girl. She was evidently part Indian, dressed in barbaric colors and painted to match. At the time she was singing a plaintive little folk song about a little bird who had been so unfortunate as to

lose both its father and its mother. . . . Kelly sat gazing on her face, his eyes shining with adoration, and apparently much moved by the fortunes of the little bird. I thought of his last words as he left me that evening. He was keeping his promise as to Daisy.

* * * * *

On my way home I chanced to pass Wah Sing's shop and glanced into the window. Dominating the display and crowding the phials of cocaine and morphine to one side, was a handsome solid silver toilet case, each of the many articles engraved with a highly ornate "D."



The Only One

By Geo. B. Jenkins, Jr.

SMILING happily, Roberta entered her home and hummed her way to her boudoir. She throbbed to a lilting melody, for that evening she had an engagement with a charming man who—

She noticed a square of paper upon the dresser. A premonition of disaster laid an icy hand upon her heart; she picked up the note with reluctant fingers.

She gasped and repressed a desire to scream. Her eyes went instinctively to a mirror; even as anguish twisted her features she compelled her face to remain calm.

"He did this deliberately!" she whispered viciously, thinking of her husband and not the charming man. "Bob knew that it would ruin me—ruin me!"

Once more Roberta read the note while fury shook her. "Anyone else in the world, and I wouldn't have cared!" she cried. "But he had to take Jeanette!"

She thought of the charming man she had planned to meet; the meeting would not occur. She thought of the years to come; they were desolate, bleak, grim with regret.

"Bob could have eloped with the cook," she told the unresponsive walls, "and I wouldn't have cared! He could have gone to Europe with the upstairs maid, or the nurse, or my secretary, or—anyone but Jeanette!"

Roberta was miserable. Jeanette, the incomparable Jeanette, the only maid Roberta had ever had who could arrange her hair so that the gray ones didn't show—the only one—gone! *Oh, desolation!*



Hyacinths

By Helen Woljeska

WHEN she stood on tiptoes she could just reach up to their bewildering loveliness—white, rose-colored, pale blue—the whole flower-stand filled to overflowing. She breathed their perfume ecstatically, her long eyes half closed, her little mouth half opened, and with this perfume she breathed in the whole atmosphere of the sumptuous room, the aristocratic street, all her fantastic childhood dreams, expressed in the one term—spring in Vienna!

And as the years passed, whenever she came across the too-sweet fragrance of hyacinths, it still meant the one thing—spring in Vienna! No matter where she was, in a faraway country, in poverty and sorrow, hyacinths

brought back the glamour, and luxury, and mysterious anticipations of her childhood days, in Vienna, in the spring . . . !

Then a change came. The fantastic dreams were replaced by realities no less fantastic. Surroundings no longer mattered, for wherever she was she felt in contact with the things she most desired. She still loved the perfume of hyacinths. But it no longer meant "spring in Vienna." On each slender, curled petal she now clearly saw the Greek letters for "woe" . . . And hyacinths now mean "life" to her, all life, everywhere and at all times, the too-sweet blend of beauty and sorrow — of love and death.



Dream Brought You

By Helen Hoyt

DREAM brought you to my bed—
(O dream may dare!)

Dream laid my hands about your head—
It was a strangeness to find you there,
To find your lips so near. . . .

Will you not give me my bliss,
Will you not stay?
Half-met, half-felt—O lost kiss,
O lips drifting away!—
Almost, almost, within my arms you lay!



Noisette of Venison

By Charles G. Shaw

IT happened several years ago in Bellevois, that picturesque haunt with its symmetrical rows of olive trees, with its rambling lanes of underbrush, with its glossy, mud-baked roofs, and its sunken grotto where, it was rumored, there once gushed the fountain of perpetual youth. However true this may have been or the other countless legends woven about Bellevois, it was certainly a most engaging retreat, and an extremely well managed hostelry was its *Hôtel et Restaurant d'Angleterre et de Choiseul*.

In a corner of the Louis Quatorze Room of that establishment one evening sat Lawrence Gorman studying the menu and sipping a glass of vermouth. How he thrilled at the thought of those gastronomic delights in store for him, for Gorman was an old patron of the restaurant, and he knew that whatever he might order would be superb; it was merely a question of selection. Indeed, for many years, he had considered the Choiseul as possessing the best chef in all Europe, and he glowed inwardly as he perused the titles that decorated the various dishes.

There was brook trout *Amandine*; and mushrooms *sous cloche*; there was filet of sole *Monegasque*; and *ris de veau Renaissance* with Madeira sauce; there was *hure de sanglier aux pistaches* and asparagus tips *provençale*; there was heart of the palm *Mousseline*; supreme of capon *Eugénie*, poulet de Gram *sauté Marengo*; red leg partridge *aux muscats*; Strasbourg patés; Scotch grouse with wild rice; *cèpes sautés Bordelaise*. . . . And there was *noisette* of venison *Grand Veneur*!

Gorman paused and smacked his lips. Whatever else he might have, he would, at any rate, partake of the venison, for he was of the opinion there was no morsel he had ever devoured comparable to that variety as prepared at the Choiseul. It was not merely a dish; it was an event. Succulent and tender, garnished with a *purée* of chestnuts, in its magenta mantle of sauce, it made one forgive one's enemies and forget one's self.

Noisette of venison it should be, by all means, for the *pièce de résistance*. The remainder of the repast he would build around it, and Eugène, the princely-mannered *maitre d'hôtel*, bowed in respect and recognition of the gourmet's faultless taste.

Caviar *d'Astrakhan* would make a good beginning. Gorman thought—caviar *d'Astrakhan* with that thin, crisp toast ever so slightly browned—toast *à la Reine*, they called it. Yes, he would have plenty of toast. After that a green turtle soup, scented with sherry, he believed would be the thing. And, of course, a few sprigs of salted celery. An *haut-sauterne* should accompany the soup, and, perhaps, a glass or two of Château-Latour with the fish. Then there would be a sparkling Burgundy to follow—a sparkling Burgundy with the venison. It was a perfect combination, and he so much preferred Burgundy to any other wine at dinner. *Petits pois à l'étuvé* would blend harmoniously with the *noisette*. Yes, certainly *petits pois à l'étuvé*. The salad would be *Macédoine* with Rocquefort dressing, and then some wild strawberries that were not in season, but quite

delicious—and very expensive. He would top off the whole affair with a confiture made in Sicily and some Pont Evêque, while a thimble or so of Chambéry Chartreuse should fasten it in his memory. And he beamed at the thought of the varied delicacies. But especially, he dwelt upon the *noisette* of venison. Eugène bowed for the seventeenth time and disappeared in the direction of the kitchen. . . .

It was one of those lazy autumn days that awaken strange, dim recollections, and dusk was just beginning to drape its cloudy cloak over the surrounding landscape. Gorman sipped his vermouth and gazed out of the latticed window, lost in reverie. In the distance Lake Fleury turned from violet to indigo, and here and there a light of some neighboring farmhouse blinked through the fast departing twilight. There was a note of enchantment in the picture; there was a touch of fantasy. Somewhere a song-bird chirruped its evening carol.

What a sublime spot, Gorman thought to himself. What a setting for a romance! Who could have helped falling in love in the seduction of such a background? Surely it had been designed by Cupid, himself.

And with a sigh of rapture rather than regret, he turned his gaze from the window, and looked straight into the eyes of a solitary young woman who sat toying with a cigarette three tables away. How she had previously escaped his notice he could not possibly imagine, for so startlingly beautiful she was that he dropped his serviette on the floor and came very nearly upsetting his glass of vermouth. Indeed, she seemed the loveliest creature he had ever beheld. Great, lustrous, jet-black eyes shone from beneath a mass of auburn curls; her lashes were long and curved, and her exquisitely-chiseled mouth resembled a rose-bud in June. Like flawless ivory was her complexion.

Gorman swallowed a mouthful of air, and adjusted his already perfectly arranged tie.

The caviar arrived, and in lackadaisical fashion he went through the motions of nibbling it, while the young woman daintily sipped her coffee and blew thin puffs of smoke from her pretty, pouting lips. With the advent of the soup, which was attended by three waiters amid considerable ceremony, Gorman shook himself and proceeded to gulp down three spoonfuls of it. The perfect cuisine of the Choiseul was alas! wholly lost upon him. The sauterne remained untouched, and the filet of sole, bathed in a sauce of nectar and garnished with mushrooms and truffles, served merely as something with which to play.

Thrusting aside her cigarette, the lovely creature gathered together certain trinkets and paraphernalia, so essential to the feminine sex, and directed her waiter to bring the bill: she was preparing to leave. But he must not lose sight of her, Gorman cried to himself. No, not for an instant. And she might be gone at any moment. Who was she? Where was she staying? He must meet her, at all events. And everything else paled into complete insignificance.

Then, with the grace of a gazelle, she quietly rose from the table and glided slowly toward the door.

* * * * *

"But the *noisette*, M'sieu! The *noisette*!" Eugène was entreating. "Surely, M'sieu, you are not going before the *noisette*. The *spécialité* of the house, and the chef has prepared it with such very great pains." And a note of heartfelt sorrow crept into his squeaky voice.

Gorman waved him aside, at the same time thrusting into his outstretched hand a folded banknote.

"Damn the *noisette*!" he muttered, and passed out of the room.



The Desperado

By Gene Markey

THE ancient plainsman, lying behind a screen of buck-brush and scrub pine high among the rocks, suddenly lifted his head. Below on the winding road one of the Transportation Company's red buses, filled with tourists, rumbled into view; and as old Ned Beetle peered down from his vantage point, it disappeared around a curve into the Big Thompson Cañon.

"Hm!" Old Ned Beetle's wrinkled, weather-beaten jaws moved, and he spat tobacco-juice over the cliff. Beneath the wide brim of his battered hat his faded blue eyes squinted toward the dust cloud that hovered in the wake of the red bus. That vehicle, the evolution of the stage-coach of slower days in these mountains, carried ten tourists from Denver to Estes Park. It was July, and the tourist season was at its height; each morning five or six red buses, a few minutes apart, passed this point. Suppose there were five of them with ten passengers each—that would be fifty tourists. Now it were only plausible to speculate that each tourist would have, upon his or her person, money and valuables to the extent of, say, ten dollars; some of them more. But fifty tourists, at ten dollars each, would amount to five hundred dollars. . . .

"Ain't sech a bad idee!"

Slowly old Ned Beetle got to his feet and spat again, and ran a gnarled finger across his drooping, tobacco-stained gray mustaches. He was attired in a collarless blue cotton shirt, a nondescript vest, and worn checked trousers tucked into old-fashioned high boots from which protruded huge silver

spurs. A romantic and picturesque figure of the old West, one might have remarked; but, hearing it, Ned Beetle would have scowled ferociously. Seventy he was, yet he railed at encroaching old age—denied, in fact, that it existed or in any way slowed up his activities. Indeed, his very presence this morning, on the high cliff above the cañon road, bore witness to his defiance of time.

Some twenty years before, Ned Beetle, road-agent *par excellence*, once the terror of three states, had held up his last U. P. train. Various influences, chief among them his good wife, had caused him to renounce his colorful career of crime. Then, too, there was a certain ambitious young sheriff in Montana who, attracted by the price upon Ned Beetle's head, had sworn to take him, dead or alive. Even then the old West was changing. . . . Those novel forces, law and order, were each day making themselves unpleasantly conspicuous throughout the cow country. . . . Tom Horn had just been hanged in Cheyenne. . . . Stage coaches, once his pleasure to hold up, were giving way to trains—and it was considerable bother to stop a train. . . .

Moved, as we say, by various influences, Ned Beetle had, with his wife, Sarah, migrated from the scenes of many of his dark deeds to the more peaceful mountains of Colorado, where he had settled down upon a little ranch—and been promptly forgotten. Sheriffs had come and sheriffs had gone, but Ned Beetle, upon whose head there had been, for fifty years, a price, had never been captured.

The sun was almost overhead in the blue sky this July morning as he scrambled through underbrush down the hillside to a patch of grass, where his horse, Susie, grazed peacefully, reins hanging. Susie, like her owner, was a relic of other days; a fat buckskin mare with one-glass eye, and bearing ornate trappings—a beaded bridle and an antique Mexican saddle, with a "pancake" horn and the words "Ned Beetle" carved across the low cantle.

"Ho, thar!" growled the outlaw of other days, catching up the reins. His tone inferred that Susie would have pranced spiritedly away, yet, in truth, the ancient horse stood docilely, head bowed, while he climbed stiffly into the saddle. Then, with a jingle of spurs, they were off at a jolting trot across the rolling plains toward Ned Beetle's little ranch midway between Fort Collins and the Big Thompson cañon road.

"Say they was fifty o' them tourists," he muttered to himself as Susie jogged along, "an' s'pose they'd be ten dollars apiece on 'em—that 'ud be five hundred dollars. By jeeminy, I'll do it!"

II

THAT evening as Sarah Beetle put away the dishes in the kitchen of the little old log ranch-house, she observed her spouse taking down from over the stone fireplace his two long-barreled Colt .45s. Curious, the good woman paused. He possessed a rifle, used for game; these antique Colts, with their bone handles, were grim souvenirs of Ned Beetle's spectacular career as a road-agent and bad-man from 1873 to 1904. Not in nineteen years had they been removed from the antelope horns on which they hung over the fireplace, save for their weekly cleaning. And Sarah Beetle happened to know that both pistols had been cleaned two days before.

The ancient outlaw, unaware that his better half watched from the kitchen doorway, balanced them affectionately in his hands, thrust them inside his belt

and brought them forth with a quick "draw."

"Ned Beetle!"

With a guilty start he whirled about, attempting to hide the long pistols behind him.

"What 're you doin' with them guns?"

"Huh?" he stammered, evading the sharp scrutiny of Mrs. Beetle. "Why, I-I heerd a coyote out by the corral las' night, an' I jes' nachally—"

"Coyote, nothin'!" sniffed his wife. "You aint never used *them* on coyotes."

"Wa-al, Sary," old Ned Beetle grinned sheepishly, "this might a-ben a wolf!"

Shaking her head at this evasion of truth, Mrs. Beetle proceeded to her domestic duties in the kitchen, and the man, on whose head there had been for fifty years a price, sat him down and reached for the bottle of oil, the wire and little rag with which he cleaned his beloved pistols.

In the stone fireplace a cheery blaze of pine sticks crackled, and as Ned Beetle sat spinning the cylinders of the long-barreled Colts and listening to each click, a mellow mood of reminiscence stole over him. Somehow, the feeling of these guns in his hands always brought back thoughts of other days. Other days—better days! Old Ned Beetle sighed. Life here on the little ranch with Sarah was comfortable—but dull. True enough, Sarah was a superb cook, but his adventurous soul, even at seventy, yearned for something beyond a perfectly baked apple pie. That was the trouble—an adventurous soul! Old Ned Beetle craved excitement.

For nearly twenty years now the stream of his life had run on uneventfully, peacefully, like a brook at sunset, yet during the thirty years preceding 1904 this life had been a turbulent mountain river. . . . The figure vaguely pleased him. A smile crept over his weather-beaten features and a far-away look showed in his eyes. . . .

What a life he had led! Memories of bold deeds fluttered pleasantly across his mind. . . . The time he had

stuck up his first stage, a few miles from Fort Laramie, one sunny autumn afternoon in '73. . . . Other daring jobs, on other stage lines, down through the years, when Wells-Fargo strong-boxes were a source of comfortable revenue. . . . One event stood out in his memory: The time he had been shot in a getaway by "Toothpick" McClelland, the boy driver of the John Zimmerman stage. . . . That was the day he had met Sarah. Sarah had been a passenger inside the coach—and one glance from her tranquil blue eyes had vanquished him—*him*, Ned Beetle, the desperado no sheriff's posse had ever been able to capture!

The retired outlaw grunted. Yes, Sarah had been his undoing. He should never have married her. Matrimony, as many another artist learned, had interfered with a brilliant career. Life had never been the same since: Sarah had reformed him. For twenty years, now, he had wasted away upon this peaceful ranch, missing sadly the by-gone days: the dashing attacks upon stage-coaches, skirmishes with waring Sioux, gorgeous revels in the bar-rooms of Deadwood and Dodge City and Cheyenne, unforgettable thrills when U. P. trains halted at his command. The old days!

In the firelight a flush of youth seemed to stain the withered cheeks of Ned Beetle, and his faded blue eyes gleamed. With infinite care he loaded both pistols and spun the cylinders. Tomorrow was a new day!

For nearly a score of years he had languished among these sleepy Colorado mountains—a forgotten desperado. Well, he would be a forgotten desperado no longer! Revolt stirred his soul—revolt against the dull reform with which Sarah had shackled him. Time was when the name of Ned Beetle struck terror to passengers on many a stage line. Tomorrow he would show the world Ned Beetle was not dead. "Not dead, but sleeping!" Grimly he chuckled. Let this new sheriff look out! Stiffly, yet none the less defiantly, he stood up, pistols in hand. Tomorrow Ned Beetle would once more take

to the road—to hold up the red bus carrying tourists to Estes Park!

III

THAT night he slept but fitfully. The old excitement seemed to run hot in his blood, and when gray dawn crept in at the little cabin windows, Ned Beetle was up and pulling on his boots.

"My stars!" reproved Sarah, peering at him from the cozy warmth of the bed, "What ails you, anyhow? You ain't slep' a wink!"

"Sary," replied the desperado, hastening out, lest she observe the guilty look upon his face. "This morning I aim t' start yer fire 'n the stove. An' if you like, I'll git the breakfus'."

"Ned Beetle," exclaimed the good woman, suspicion and asthma in her voice, "if you ain't the biggest liar! Somethin's wrong, an' I know it! What ails you?"

But he had fled. A moment later she heard him rattling pots and pans in the kitchen and a perplexed sigh escaped her.

"That ol' fool's up to somethin'," she muttered. "There's a queer look in his eye!"

After breakfast Ned Beetle took up his old rawhide *reata* and set forth for the pasture, below the corral. Old Susie was turned out each night to graze; and each morning, as if she were a fractious colt, Ned Beetle went through the process of roping her. Perhaps it amused him to fancy that the rope was necessary, but at any rate, for twenty years he had caught Susie in that manner; and each morning the ancient mare stood patiently while the rawhide loop sang through the air and settled over her bowed head.

On this particular morning, as he buckled on the fancy bridle, Ned Beetle roared, "Ho! Stan' still, thar!" as if old Susie had been a pitching bronco. And docilely she stood while her Navajo blanket was put on, and the great carved saddle, with its "pancake" horn and *tappaderos*, cinched.

The sun was climbing over the

ragged rim of mountains, and the sky was a cloudless blue as old Ned Beetle rode jauntily past the log ranch-house. From the kitchen doorway Sarah hailed him.

"Whar you goin'?"

"T' the store," replied her lord, evading the suspicious glance she cast upon him.

"Ned Beetle, you come back here!"

"Ain't got time!" Hastily he touched old Susie's fat sides with his huge silver spurs, and jogged out of sight around the corral shed. Here he dismounted. Under a soap box, wrapped round with a blue cotton bandana, lay the twin .45 Colt's. He had hidden them there before Sarah was out of bed. Eagerly Ned Beetle seized them, and thrust them in his belt. Then he tied the blue cotton bandanna loosely about his throat. Sarah suspected something. It would never do for her to discover the object of this early morning foray. Losing no time he remounted the elderly buckskin mare.

"Go 'long, thar!" And with a jingle of spurs he rode off through the fragrant pine trees, and down the trail.

IV

ON the cliff above the cañon road, Ned Beetle drew rein and squinted up at the sun. The hour was close to ten: in a short while the transportation Company's red buses would be rolling along into the Big Thompson cañon.

Two days before he had blazed a little trail down through the scrub pines and underbrush, to the road. Down this hidden trail he now proceeded, the faithful Susie picking her steps with nicety. In a clump of trees beside the road, he dismounted, and the old horse, sighing, stooped to crop such spare green weeds as grew there.

For some twenty minutes—though to him, it seemed hours—Ned Beetle crouched there, waiting, a strange excitement quickening his pulses. Not in twenty years had he experienced such an expectant thrill. Ah, this was the life! Adventure—romance!

From down the road the sound of an approaching motor. Swiftly the desperado adjusted the blue bandanna as a mask over the lower half of his face, and drew the pistols in readiness.

"Hell!"

The automobile that rounded the curve into view proved to be no red bus, but merely a battered, a panting Ford, bearing a Nebraska license, and several people, children and dogs, with bedding, lanterns and an ice-box tied on the rear.

Thrusting the pistols back into his belt, the roadagent ducked low among the bushes and allowed the car to rattle past in safety. It had never been said of him, even in the wildest days of his career, that Ned Beetle robbed the poor.

Another twenty minutes passed, and then, from down the road came the unmistakable rumble of a red bus. This time it was business! Old Susie, reins hanging, stood ready. In his mind's eye Ned Beetle saw the driver and ten tourists, pockets inside out, standing, hands in air, backs to the road, while he escaped up his secret trail—where no sheriff's posse might follow. With a hand that trembled, he once more adjusted the bandanna, drew his Colt's .45's and crouched in readiness. The sound of the approaching motor-stage came louder.

Then, as he waited, it rounded the curve into view, and rumbled toward him up the road, swirling a cloud of dust—a large red bus, crowded with tourists. Of a sudden Ned Beetle, once the terror of three states, leaped rheumatically out from the underbrush brandishing his long-barrelled pistols.

Melodrama! The stage-driver, a pink-cheeked college youth, jammed on his brakes, and with many creaks the big red bus slid to a stop. A woman screamed. There in the middle of the road stood the menacing figure of a masked bandit. A scene such as might have been enacted in the Black Hills in the old days! Yet before Ned Beetle had time to steady his own nerves, flour-

ish his guns and demand the money and valuables of the passengers, something happened. The bushes by the roadside parted, and appeared the figure of a woman—an old woman in a faded blue gingham dress, with a pink wool shawl clutched about her shoulders.

"Ned Beetle!" and old voice quavered as the tourists huddled together in trepidation.

A startled oath broke from the bandanna that masked the desperado's features; the pistols wavered, and he whirled around—to find himself staring into the snapping black eyes of his wife.

"What're you up to—you ol' fool!" Belligerently Sarah advanced into the road toward him. "I'll show you! Now you march home!"

The outlaw gasped, staggered backward, turned and bolted into the bushes. Catching up old Susie's reins he made a wild spring for the saddle, clapped spurs to the mare, and fled precipitously up the trail.

V

THAT night as blue shadows lengthened over the mountains, Ned Beetle, once the terror of three states, sat silent before a crackling blaze on his own hearth. Over the mantle, two bone-handled Colt .45s hung from a pair of antelope's horns, their long barrels gleaming in the firelight.

Sarah Beetle, coming in from the kitchen, paused with a sharp glance toward her spouse.

"Humph!" she observed caustically. "Should think you'd be ashamed o' yerself—actin' up that-a-way—an' at your age! Whut you need, Ned Beetle, is a nurse!"

The aged desperado stirred uneasily in his chair.

"The next time," she threatened, "I ketch you up t'any o' yer ol' tricks, I'll . . ."

"Hell!" grunted Ned Beetle. With a long-drawn sigh, he spat vindictively into the fire. "Hell!"



The Dance

By Jay Jarrod

THE floor was crowded with pirouetting couples and the orchestra was playing a catchy one-step that set the toes a-tingling and the head a-reeling.

"Don't you adore this thing they're playing?" gushed my partner, and I turned my head to murmur assent. Then, suddenly, my thoughts seemed to snap within me. The whole business was so brazen, so unabashed, so bold. Here was I clasping to my breast a woman I had never set eyes upon an hour previous, a woman whose lips almost touched my own, whose arm entwined my shoulder, and whose husband sat yawning not a dozen feet away.



Life

By Floyd Meredith

YOU are a thread
Spun out.

Soon

You will part from me
. . . With a little snap.

Philosopher

By John McClure

I AM a philosopher. I have been wrestling with a poem in eight lines and a sextet. I am a philosopher. I shall never have dreams any more. I would rather make perfect caroms at billiards, play an invincible game of chess, or have forty dollars in the bank, than be a poet. I would rather be drunk or a wise man than write sonnets that would make the world blink.

All the sonnets that ever were writ were written in water. . . . In a million years. . . . Eh? Will Shakespeare, and Tupper, and I? . . . In a million years. . . .

All the poems that ever were writ were written in water. Even the Ballad of Dead Ladies will one day be forgot. . . .

Too many beers have given me a headache. I shall never have dreams any more. . . . In a million years. . . .



Didos

By Peter Kerrigan

MARRIAGE is the result of catarrh of the imagination.

WHEN a woman no longer gets pleasure out of a simple flirtation, it's time she was dropped from a moral man's list of acquaintances.

LOVE: a mixture of absinthe and paris green.

WOMEN are much more clever than they seem. That is why they do not seem more clever.

BEFORE marriage a man insists that his fiancée assure him that she lives only for him. After marriage he employs a private detective to assure him that she lives only with him.

TO the dull all things are dull, just as, to the brilliant nothing is brilliant.

BUFFOONERY is the pugilist of humor.
Wit is its referee.

A WOMAN who asks a man's name before she lets him kiss her is the sort who marries a man for love.

A LIE is the truth until found out. The truth is a lie until proven.

The Chaperon

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

JOHN BENTON was cut out for a youthful marriage, just as I was destined from the start to amble along through life as a confirmed bachelor. I had the unfortunate faculty of being able to get out of my own skin and view my actions objectively. Benton, however, was always losing his head and plunging into romantic adventures. Once a woman attracted him, he saw her alone. He had no idea whether he was acting like a fool or like an inspired lover. The poor fellow, by an unfortunate mischance, did not land a wife in his youth; the point was that it required a certain maturity and sophistication to start him reeling. Those assets, combined with beauty, are to be found only in married women. So married women it was, from the very beginning. Benton was involved in one scrape after another; by the time he was twenty-five, he possessed a rather unpleasant reputation as a philanderer. Men with wives were afraid of him.

That was years ago. Today, Benton is merely an object of pity. Though he has never married, he is classed on all sides in the ignominious roll of betrayed husbands. He is about as dignified a personage at present as the husband of the giddy heroine in a Restoration comedy.

There was nothing giddy about Alice King. As a matter of fact, conventional virtue had no stauncher champion than she. Witness the part I played in her life for five years! To show you how utterly remote the woman was from Restoration stand-

ards, I have only to state that I acted the unimpeachable rôle of chaperon in drama. I was no male Duenna, affording a sham tinge of decency and tiptoeing away at a given signal. Not once in the whole five years did I scuttle off the scene; I remained planted between Alice and Benton. Their relation was far removed from the illicit plane of the man's other romances; indeed, the whole business fairly reeked of respectability. They were a pair beyond reproach. Still, I often felt myself a pretty sorry figure in a pretty dreary tangle; for, in its essentials, the intimacy of Alice and Benton was sordid enough, in all conscience.

Benton had come leaping up the staircase of my house late one night and had burst into the library. "I saw the light as I walked by," he explained, "and I didn't feel sleepy, somehow—"

He threw himself into a chair and sheepishly returned my inquisitive glance. I read his symptoms at once. He was unique, I told myself for the hundredth time. Twenty-nine years old and a scarred veteran of many amorous tilts, he still couldn't look another man in the eye, couldn't simulate indifference at the moment of a new infatuation. "Good God!" I groaned inwardly. "He's after some woman again. He wants to tell me all about it and at the same time he's determined that wild horses won't drag the secret out of him."

This particular evening was typical—at first. I gave him his chance to keep the whole business dark. I kept to strictly non-committal topics. Benton didn't listen. After about fifteen min-

utes of my light conversation, he suddenly sat up straight, and, interrupting me in the middle of a sentence, blurted out, "Well—I'm engaged."

I gave him a startled look. I certainly hadn't expected that projectile. I had long ago despaired of a conventional romance in his career. I had expected the procession of married women to go on to the crack of doom. It took me some time to pump up the proper felicitations. "I'm glad to hear it," I announced at length. "I've told you often enough that's what you're meant for. When's it to be?"

My question seemed to plunge him on the instant into melancholy. He set his jaws hard and mumbled, "Oh—we haven't set any date. We don't know just when we'll be married."

Yes, tonight *was* different. I had never before known him to feel anything but the most boisterous exultation in his good-fortune. Once he got launched, he was apt to tell you more than you had bargained for about the adored one. This gloomy reticence bewildered me.

"You don't seem too damned happy about it," I ventured by way of prodding him to something like his old ebullience.

"Happy?" he echoed. "No, I guess I'm not so very happy. This isn't like the other times, you see."

Evidently not! His laconic attitude made me itch to know more. "By the way—what's her name? Or aren't you planning to let that out just yet?" I concealed my eagerness and evinced merely a host-like interest.

He shook his head and sighed. "The whole thing is so peculiar, such a tremendous responsibility. It scares me, I can tell you, when I think what I've got to measure up to." He hesitated, then squared his shoulders and announced with a suggestion of defiance, "Never mind—now—*who* she is."

"Oh, all right!" I simulated perfect indifference.

After a pause of lugubrious length, I proceeded to manufacture an immense yawn and in the midst of it mouthed

out the fact that I was sleepy. "I think I'll go to bed," I told him, with the shrewd idea that he wouldn't let me off without some more definite disclosure than he had yet vouchsafed. "The fire's good for another hour or two. Just stay where you are and make yourself comfortable."

Benton became at that more than ever morose. "No—I'll get out. I want a walk."

"A walk!" I gave him a look of sheer astonishment. "Why, it's long after midnight."

"Is it?" That apparently did not concern him. "I want a walk," he repeated stupidly. "I couldn't sleep tonight if I tried." At which, without being aware of it, he indulged in a yawn that put my fictitious one to shame. Then, getting up, he remarked, "I suppose I *am* an ass."

I did not attempt to deny it. He stood facing me for a moment and scowling out his perplexity. As I watched him, I knew right away that he was going to tell me something. He couldn't stand any longer the thought of his mystery going undivulged. So I assumed a receptive air and waited.

He shook hands in silence and strode to the door. On the threshold he turned and exclaimed, "Oh, hell! You might as well know who it is. It's your cousin, Alice King."

With that parting shot he plunged out and slammed the door after him.

II

ENGAGED! The word was certainly characteristic of the virtuous Alice. I realized, at once that Benton had entered upon a brand-new phase of his existence. From now on, everything would be icily regular and proper to a degree. I pitied the man—but nobody would have thought of pitying Alice. From the start, I found myself deploring the fact that poor Benton hadn't blundered into another of his haphazard amours. A connection with Alice would somehow be like standing forever under the spray of a fountain. Of course, the

cold drops of her favor would be for a time a balm to the man's fevered state; he always ran a high temperature when he fell in love. But how long would it take him to get chilled to the very marrow by the frigid trickle? Engaged! Yes, that was typical of Alice. Making their love-affair a perpetual threesome, with myself as indefatigable chaperon, was also typical of her.

No wonder Benton had glared at me when I mentioned the marriage-day. He was hopelessly enamoured of Alice, he believed her of an unapproachable perfection—but just the same he hated to be reminded of stark facts. Even he could have sensed the cold-blooded quality of the arrangements if he had dared to allow himself thoughts on the subject. Alice King happened to be possessed of an elderly husband; moreover, she happened to be living with him and tending him in his declining years. She would have been appalled by the very mention of the divorce courts. Instead, she busied herself with her plan for a second marriage—after King's death. Twelve months and a day she had set apart for a period of mourning. Then, on the three hundred and sixty-seventh day—

Meanwhile, King dragged on a feeble, unprofitable existence for five long years.

Alice was a beautiful, ivory-and-gold creature. I never thought of her as flesh and blood, somehow. She was undoubtedly in love with the handsome and romantic Benton at first—proud, too, of her conquest; but she didn't let her emotions get the better of her dignity. Her sense of fitness was unerring. When Benton put it up to me that my respectable presence was absolutely essential to their scheme, I allowed myself to be drawn into it. I was to some degree reluctant; I was also curious to see how it would all work out. It didn't take me long to accept the situation prosaically; if I had been paid for my services I could not have been more faithful or uncomplaining. The three of us dined together at restaurants, went on to a play or to the

opera afterward, perhaps dropped in at somebody's dance later. There was nothing lethargic or indolent about Alice. I have known few women with such unbounded energy; she was as untiring as a mechanism of polished steel. I held up my end well enough; as a matter of fact, I enjoyed being on the jump almost as much as Alice herself did.

The queer part of it was that Benton proved unequal to the pace and before long began to show signs of the wear and tear.

I remember so well one night—it was some two years after Benton had broken the news of his engagement to me—when he and I had obediently accompanied Alice to the Biltmore after a dull and exhausting performance of "Lohengrin." As we sat at our table, I first became conscious that our atmosphere was undergoing an ominous change. Benton was dog-tired. He hadn't the strength to keep up his part of the conversation. All his energy was expended in the sheepish attempt to suppress his yawns. He would cross his legs, uncross them and re-cross them, apparently convinced that the only way to stay awake was to work his limbs. Alice was vaguely annoyed, I could see. She paid no attention whatever to her lover. She talked to me with her usual cool precision and ironic intelligence.

Benton, his elbows on the table and his heavy head propped up by the backs of his hands, suddenly remarked in an injured tone, "I wish we could have a nice quiet evening once in a while—"

He had interrupted Alice in the middle of a sentence. She raised her eyebrows a trifle, but, without taking further notice of him, finished calmly what she had been saying.

"Why couldn't we dine with you, George—say once a week—and toast our toes at the fire afterward?" Benton was sleepily dogged.

Since he had put it up to me, I perforce welcomed his suggestion. "It would be jolly," I acknowledged. I turned to Alice. "What do you say?"

"Toast our toes at the fire," she mused. She flashed a bright, cold glance at Benton. "You're getting altogether too domestic, John. If you have such stupid ideas, for heaven's sake keep them to yourself."

I didn't half understand her obvious impatience then; it was only long afterward I realized that, as she spoke, she was without doubt conjuring up some dreary vision of the coming years, with Benton in carpet-slippers and smoking-jacket, the top button of his trousers perhaps unbuttoned to ease his growing paunch, his legs stretched out to the logs and his face a picture of sedentary sloth.

She shivered slightly. "I don't want any of your nice quiet evenings, John," she complained. "I for one don't believe in dangerous precedents."

Benton had been finding it difficult to follow her. His mazed eyes were full of adoration and apology; he had just enough sense left to know that he had blundered.

"I thought you looked tired, Alice—that you'd maybe want a rest," he lied clumsily. He pressed his lips together and his stifled yawn inflated his cheeks. With his handkerchief he wearily mopped at his watery eyes and lapsed into a sullen silence.

The music struck up at that moment and Alice sprang to her feet. Benton lurched in his chair and half-rose. But Alice's hand was already on my arm. "I'm dancing this with George," she informed her somnolent betrothed.

This was the third time in succession that she and I had left poor Benton alone at the table. He sank back into his seat now—and it seemed to me he sent an ugly look in my direction.

When we made our way back to the table, there sat Benton, his head still supported by his hands and his eyes fast closed in sleep. Alice gave me a quick look and drew a deep breath of exasperation. There was a spiteful gleam in her eyes as she fixed them again on Benton.

"That is a symbolic picture of the devoted husband," she announced. "A

woman would have enough cleverness—enough tact—not to show herself asleep with the lights on. He must be very sure of me indeed. Wake him up, George, and we'll go home. I've had enough domesticity for one night."

She turned her back on the table, and, after I had got her into her wrap, hurried away. I didn't blame her for refusing to be a witness of the awakening. Benton was an extremely handsome chap; but no man at the moment of opening his slumber-grogged eyes is what one would call a pretty sight. I had the queer idea as I shook him by the shoulder that his beard had sprung up astonishingly during his nap. He looked somehow unkempt and soiled and almost sodden. It certainly didn't pay, I reflected, to show yourself asleep to the woman you meant to marry. Leading him out in Alice's wake, I quite understood the glare she threw at him over her shoulder.

III

BENTON was not tiring of Alice. The real truth of the situation was that this first respectable alliance of his career brought to the surface all the qualities in him I had claimed for him in his disreputable past. He had soon lost his romantic bloom and sunk to the level of a husband of at least ten years' standing. I honestly believe Alice herself must have felt, time and again, like an out-and-out bigamist. In the beginning, she probably had the consolation of being helplessly driven along, swept beyond power of resistance—if not beyond the limits of her rigid code of etiquette. It was unfortunate that the man's fervor should have settled to a more equable devotion. He became at once uxorious and prosaic. He longed to rest tranquil in his affection. To toast his toes before the fire and to have at his side her face, lit by the glow, to maunder over! Benton, a man in his early thirties, had degenerated into a middle-aged, middle-class spouse. Alice's stark vision of the coming years would beyond question have been Ben-

ton's conception of Paradise. Yes, he had been cut out for marriage—and for marriage of the most conventional kind. He had apparently forgotten that the bond between him and Alice wasn't yet legal and indissoluble. So he showed himself fretful at our round of gaiety. Not that he ever asserted himself beyond a blundering peevishness! He was simply a typical example of the heckled husband, complaining sometimes but never losing the dog-like, faithful expression in his eyes. In the end, Alice and I had all we could do to keep him from behaving in an irrational and indiscreet fashion. In restaurants he would paw at her arm stupidly, with an air of fond proprietorship; he would lean over and mumble in her ear. It was positively almost senile, his conduct at times. I took occasion often to give him a stiff talking-to, reminding him that it was decidedly perilous to take Alice for granted. He would sulk for a while and then growl at me to shut up.

He still proved himself capable of a smouldering jealousy. He was forever eying me with a sullen absorption and snapping me up on the slightest pretext. Of course the absurdity of it struck me soon enough. I paid not the slightest attention to his moodiness. He was at liberty to spy on me to his heart's content, to attribute to me all sorts of deep motives. He would gain nothing by that policy.

IV

As the years crawled by, Alice became ever more icy to Benton's touch. She was manifestly bored to death by her life; she had not bargained on the ludicrous fate of being at one and the same time the wife of a querulous invalid and of an abject stodge. Alice, however, was shrewdly calculating. Since King's money was in trust for his relatives and her share in the estate would consist only of a modest annuity, she was not free to do as she chose. She must needs consider the future—and Benton was rich. I believed that she had some pity for her lover, besides; after all, she had tied him hand

and foot by the "engagement"; she had robbed him of all his old buoyancy and charm. He had become so absurdly dependent on her that he would be helpless without her.

I did not consider for a moment that her cordiality to me might constitute a veer in my direction. I knew but too well that Benton, at his most humdrum, was more attractive to women than I could ever hope to be. It was true, of course, that Alice in the end snubbed Benton unmercifully, even refusing half the time to answer him when he asked her a straight question. Our threesomes resolved themselves into a dialogue between her and me; her lover's part in the conversation was no more than a rumbling undercurrent. Alice's policy appeared to me transparent; she was striving to goad poor Benton out of his deep rut of domesticity, hoping to sting him to something like his former ardor.

One day when we were booked for dinner and the opera, Benton called me on the telephone and confessed chokingly that he had caught a nasty cold from sitting in a draft at the theater two nights before. He couldn't get out of bed till tomorrow—would I let Alice know?

Alice, over the wire, wasn't even perfunctorily sympathetic as to Benton's condition. "He's getting fussy about himself," she remarked. "He feels a draft wherever he goes." I really didn't blame her for her lack of solicitude. It *would* be the last straw to progress from a real invalid to an imaginary one. I myself had noticed how preoccupied Benton had seemed lately with little, unimportant aches and pains. It was another symptom of his conventional state; most husbands get a certain satisfaction out of minor infirmities.

Alice's last words, before she shut off, came as a surprise. "I'll run down to your house after dinner, George, and we'll go to see him."

I pondered her parting message at some length. Eventually I decided that her conscience had given her a sudden prick and, to make amends for dis-

counting Benton's illness, she had resolved to pay him a visit of condolence.

She would, of course, wait for me outside my house in the motor.

I watched for her automobile and, when it drew up at the curb, I started for the stairs. On my way I heard the front door open. "Mr. Pomeroy expects me. I'll go right up." Alice's voice! Bewildered, I scurried back to the library and flung off my coat. This *wasn't* like her. She might almost be accused of overstepping her rigid code. My rôle of chaperon must indeed have been played to perfection all these years. She had simply got to the point where she had forgotten I was a being blessed with a sex. Alice didn't breeze carelessly into a man's house alone.

"I came away without any coffee," she exclaimed in the doorway. "May I have a cup, George?" She slipped out of her wrap, dropped into a chair and gave me an enigmatic smile. "How flustered you look!" she mused. "Am I as rash as all that?"

"No, indeed!" I hastened to assure her. "This is jolly. Maybe I *was* a bit startled," I admitted the next moment. "I thought you kept away from men unless they hunted in couples."

"Hunted!" she protested. "How long have *you* been at that sport, George?" She laughed lightly and without waiting for a reply pursued, "You should feel honored at my trust in you."

"Oh," I returned at once, "I'm not so awfully anxious to be trusted." It sounded like a gallant speech. As a matter of fact, I was viewing the situation objectively, without the slightest personal stir. If she'd said, "How much are two times two?" and I'd answered "Four!" promptly, the little interchange would have moved me as much as this banter.

"Ah—you call yourself a hunter and you don't want to be trusted." Alice puckered her brows. "Perhaps we'd better not wait for coffee."

V

THAT evening, as I see it now with a full illumination, was comic in the ex-

treme. My denseness was impenetrable, a thick blackness that Alice vainly sought to dissipate. It did not once occur to me that she might be trying to break through my reserves. I found parrying her thrusts a pleasant diversion. We had a delightful, impersonal session of give-and-take, it seemed to me. Though I acted the blind fool, it undoubtedly appeared to Alice that I was keeping her off with a wily skill. All the time she was doing her best to hint to me that she had reached the end of her resources, that her mental state was pretty close to desperation, in fact.

Alice was not in love with me, I hasten to explain. No, indeed! But she had got to the point where anybody would be preferable to Benton in his present condition, and I was the person most conveniently at hand. I happened, moreover, to be the possessor of a decent sum of money. I might prove a release from her racking bondage. With me, she could have practical freedom—certainly there'd be no dreary waste of evenings by the fireside. Her message that night, stripped of evasions, was this: Why not continue as we had done these last five years, but, without Benton's being let into the secret, turn the tables on him by making *him* the actual chaperon? And I didn't see it! I often wonder whether Alice would have screwed up her courage to a more definite proposal if we had been left to ourselves—

I thoroughly enjoyed my talk with her, I repeat. Indeed, we got on so famously that I forgot all about the passage of time. After coffee and liqueurs, we smoked in the firelight.

I was staring at the logs during a short pause, when Alice suddenly touched my arm. "Do look!" she commanded and pointed at her slippers. "How absurd!"

"How absurdly tiny, you mean?" I asked her.

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "I wasn't calling attention to their size. I'm actually toasting my toes, George—that's the point."

"John will have a lot to be thankful

for," I returned, "if I teach you to enjoy his favorite indoor sport."

She shrugged. "Yes—I'm enjoying it," she confessed. "But John isn't here, you see. If he were, there wouldn't be room for my poor feet on the fender. Warmth always makes me talkative; and if John were with us, I should have to keep quiet for fear of waking him up. Do you ever nap, George?"

"Never!"

"How nice!" she cried. "You're really the most estimable of men." She was silent for a moment. Then, "Don't you expect to marry some time?"

"I often think it would be a good thing—for me," I admitted.

She gave me a charming smile. "I don't believe it would be any great hardship for the woman either," she commented.

"Oh—the woman!" I reflected. "I haven't gone so deeply into the thing as to think about her."

"Well—it's time you did, then," she caught me up. "You're shirking responsibility."

"No," I corrected her. "It's just rank timidity on my part. If I could wake up some morning and find myself married, I should be devilish happy. But I dread all the embarrassing preliminaries. I can't see myself going through the stages of a courtship with distinction."

"But no man keeps his dignity—or the woman's respect—during courtship," she told me. "People get to know each other too well before they're even in sight of the altar. Getting married should be a humorous adventure with somebody one *doesn't* know by heart."

"You, of all women, to talk like that!" I mocked.

She sighed. "No one's given the old method a fairer chance than I. If I say there's nothing in it, my words ought to have tremendous weight."

"But you don't really say it, you know," I challenged her. "Nothing would ever induce you to say it."

"Indeed?" She raised her eyebrows. "I'm not so sure."

Abruptly she sat up quite straight in her chair and, leaning toward me, rested a hand on my knee. She was startled—that was obvious; but her voice retained its cool clarity. "John is coming up your stairs," she informed me. "Your man has let him in."

I jumped to my feet in a panic. For the first time in my career I went through the emotions of a man trapped—albeit innocently—with another man's wife. I saw the thing looked queer; I knew it would be difficult to explain. It didn't for an instant occur to me that Alice *wasn't* Benton's wife.

VI

BEFORE he had got fairly into the room I had bolted up to him with my explanations. "So you're up and out!" I exclaimed. "Alice and I were planning to surprise you—"

"I'm not so damned surprised," he muttered with a lowering glare.

I rushed on at a headlong speed. "We were about to run over and see how you were!"

He was looking straight over my head at the clock on the mantel. "Twenty minutes to eleven is a queer time to call on a sick man," he let me know.

That silenced me, almost stunned me. Before I had recovered myself sufficiently to voice my amazement at the hour, Benton had turned his back on me. He stared with a gloomy absorption at Alice's white slippers.

"Why the devil didn't she take them off that fender?" I found myself complaining inwardly. Somehow, her being discovered in the act of toasting her pretty toes at my fire seemed to me incriminating beyond words.

"Your throat is better, John?" Alice was casual.

"No—it isn't better." He didn't dwell on his ailment, however. "I got uneasy, lying there alone," he mumbled out, still regarding her feet. "I couldn't sleep, somehow—had to make sure."

Then without warning his anger flared. "I call this the rottenest trick that's ever been played on me!" His voice in that one sentence had risen from a mutter to a shout. He swung around on me. "You're a cheat and a dirty coward, George. I've been on for years; I've seen you sneaking behind my back and trying to influence Alice against me. You've gone too far this time and you're in for a *beating*, by God!"

"Nonsense!" Alice got swiftly to her feet and faced him. "You're acting like a fool, John; and you're quite wrong—about George and me. Please be quiet for a moment and let me explain. I'm sick and tired of being misunderstood."

Benton's tirade had made me decidedly hot, but I hadn't plunged into the fray. I was still able to view the scene from an objective standpoint. I knew if I began to yell back at him, I should soon appear an idiot in my own eyes. So I let the sentimental sound and fury pass over my head and contented myself with giving him a direct, scornful scrutiny. I was vaguely irritated at Alice's entrance into the row. I had wanted only to get the miserable business over with all speed; by refusing to add fuel to his rage we should have had him spluttering out in short order.

"Now listen to me, John," Alice was continuing. "I'm glad this has happened. It will give me the chance to tell you a few things—for your own good."

Benton looked down upon her with a weary solicitude. "I'll have to ask you to wait, Alice," he said. "Don't think I blame you, my dear. I don't question your motives for a minute; I know you were brought here under false pretenses. This is between George and me."

He attempted to brush her out of his path, but she stood her ground firmly. "Not at all!" she cried. "It's between you and me, first. George had nothing to do with my coming here." Her expression had hardened to downright hatred. Of a sudden, I saw that

his clumsy anger and the nonsensical truck he had spoken had goaded her to desperation. She was in a state where it would have given her a malicious pleasure to tell him she had been faithless, to wound him cruelly even if it meant the crash of all her carefully builded plans.

I couldn't let her do that. After these many years—and with the man's fortune practically within her grasp—her fury must not be allowed to betray her into anything so suicidal.

Deliberately I interrupted her. "See here, John," I announced. "This has gone far enough. I don't mean a damned thing to Alice; you know that well enough. Moreover, she doesn't mean a damned thing to me. We're sorry to have a pleasant friendship broken off—that's all. We're quite willing, though, that it should end right here if you suspect me of any treacherous tendencies. I withdraw from our agreement—hand in my resignation, so to speak. I promise not to see her again—either alone or with you. And naturally *she* agrees to those conditions. Just get someone else to take my place. There's no need of a brawl."

I had certainly made myself plain in that harangue. Benton could do nothing but snort and choke savagely—to show me he still believed me a deep-dyed fraud. He found no words to refute me, however. Alice had examined me keenly while I talked; to her it must have become at last apparent that she had nothing to count on from me.

By the time I finished, she had regained all her cool composure. She gave me an appreciative nod and remarked to Benton, "That's very sensible. It's also much better treatment than you deserve. We've all been getting on each other's nerves lately; we need new blood. You can't seem to trust my relatives, John. Perhaps we'd better call in one of yours this time."

Clever, wonderfully resourceful woman! At this point I must give her the tribute of my belated applause. On that critical evening, however, I saw nothing significant in the fact that the

only relative Benton had in the world was a rich, charming and impressionable youth by the name of Winfield.

I helped Alice on with her wraps while her lover tramped sulkily ahead to the door. I think he was already ashamed of his outburst—but of course he wouldn't have admitted it.

"Oh, John!" I called casually after him. "I'll go down with you to the sidewalk. We can help each other—for the last time—to put Alice into her motor. Then we can go our separate ways—"

VII

THAT was the last I saw of them; at least, that proved the end of my actual connection with them. I followed their fortunes from afar, however, with undiminished curiosity. In a way, I felt like a man out of a job—or rather like a man enjoying a richly deserved holiday. One of the most interesting things I learned from the renewal of old associations—principally in the clubs I'd perforce neglected during the past five years—was that the whole world had a full knowledge of the "engagement." Benton and Alice had been spied upon by a thousand eyes. Benton's decline into dullness and domesticity was everywhere commented upon and tolerantly ridiculed. "Poor damned fool—she'll lead him a chase," was already a stale comment.

I proved to be ahead of the others in my vision of the future. Little by little, the real truth of Alice's behavior had penetrated to my brain. Benton,

by eliminating me from the drama, had simply compassed his own downfall. Had our three-some stuck the thing out to the end, Alice would never have escaped the springing of the trap she had set for herself. I should have remained true to my trust; Benton and I together would have cut off her escape.

King died three months after my polite withdrawal. When, six months later, Alice and the Winfield boy eloped under most romantic circumstances, a roar went up all over New York. I didn't join in the shout, because I had known for some time what was imminent. I felt sorry for Benton; but I couldn't help chuckling, just the same. After all, there was some justification for the howl of derision directed at him; the dozen or more married men he had wronged in the past couldn't be blamed for rejoicing in the fate, so similar to their own, that had overtaken their enemy. Alice's *coup* was nowhere condemned; she'd given New York a little comedy after true Restoration standards. The gust for publicly betrayed husbands didn't die with the court of Charles II. Benton's disgrace warmed the cockles of other men's hearts.

The Winfield boy must have been like wax in Alice's hands. He was only twenty-two and romantic after the fashion of the earlier John Benton. I often wonder whether he will come to resemble his cousin further; whether, in fact, *he* will degenerate sooner or later into domesticity and uxoriousness. I sincerely hope not—for his sake as well as for Alice's.



Propriety

By Philip D. Anderson

A YOUNG lady, evidently a very, very nice one, was standing on the street talking to a young man. Her parting words echoed in my ears:

"Oh! I mustn't stand here talking to a newly married man."

Snoring Over

By Hildegard Hawthorne

I

I'D been bumming round in England for more than a month, the Firm having handed me a ten weeks' vacation, when they cabled me to come back on the first ship I could make, as something had turned up that needed my personal attention. I'd been away on a motor trip with some friends through Kent and the cable had been waiting for me four days in London when I connected with it, so I didn't waste a minute. The only ship I could book on was the *Adriatic*, and there was just one berth, an upper, left on her. I hated sharing the stateroom, but the next sailing I could get was ten days later and I simply didn't dare wait that long.

No one was in the room when I looked into it as we were pulling out of the harbor, but my fellow-traveler's baggage was piled all about. He had a good deal—three suitcases, a roll-up and a steamer trunk—so I had some trouble finding room for my own stuff. Luckily I hadn't brought a trunk, and with the steward's help I managed to get stowed. His initials, M. B. D., were big all over his things, and somehow I got the impression he was new to traveling. Putting up a mental prayer that he wouldn't be seasick, I went out on deck.

Right then I had a pleasant surprise. For the first person I clapped eyes on was Mrs. Ilverton, whom I'd seen last at a house-party in Stoke Poges. We were old friends, and Edith, her daughter—well, you don't often have the luck to meet a girl like Edith.

Mrs. Ilverton seemed delighted to see me, telling me Edith was below getting

unpacked. It appeared that they, too, had had to sail earlier than they planned, because of the sudden illness of Mrs. Ilverton's mother.

"I think we got the very last cabin aboard," she told me, "and that only because it had just been turned back and we happened to be on the spot."

I told her of my own luck, or perhaps bad luck.

"I only hope he won't turn out to be a maniac or an invalid," I said. "Six days' confinement with an utter stranger is no joke."

She laughed and said he was probably feeling just the same way about me—"but you know you're all right, and the chances are he is, too," she prophesied. Just then Edith came up, and the talk turned to the house-party and the fun we'd had at it.

When I went down to dress for dinner I found my roommate had been there before and gone. His overcoat and woolen muffler lay across his berth. I had asked to have my seat put beside the Ilvertons' at one of the small tables, and after a very jolly dinner we went on deck. It was a fine night, full of moon and stars and the murmur of the sea, and we sat together or walked the decks in the way you do. I was gladder every minute that the two were aboard. Edith looked lovelier even than I'd remembered, and that was going some. It looked like a pleasant trip to me.

I went below about midnight and found my fellow-passenger there at last. He was in his pajamas, sitting on the edge of the couch, his hands on his knees, just waiting.

When I came in he stared at me a

moment or two out of a pair of big, dark eyes before he spoke. He was a thin, tall, dark, sort of mournful-looking man.

"My name's Dickson," he said at last. "Professor of Rhetoric at Eggleworth College. I've been waiting to make your acquaintance before I turned in. I believe I have the lower berth?"

Of course he knew darn well he had it, as it was written on his ticket, but I said yes, I was sure he did, and that was all right, I was able to sleep any place. Then I told him my name and added that I was sorry if I'd kept him up.

"Not at all, not at all, my dear Sir," he came back, waving a hand at me as though he were putting me at my ease, "but I hope you won't object if I ask you a question?"

"Go to it."

"Ah—do you snore?"

"Why, I don't know," I told him. "Never sat up to listen to myself. Guess if I lie on my back I might snore a little, like most other folks. Really, though, I don't believe I snore at all. No one ever yet told me I did."

He looked relieved.

"Because, you see," he explained, "I'm in a highly nervous condition. I've been taking a rest cure following a breakdown from overwork, a cure that is not yet completed. My doctor warned me I must have calm, uninterrupted slumber for at least nine out of the twenty-four hours, and by no means to have my nerves excited. There is nothing more fatiguing, more harassing, than to listen to someone snore, and it would be most unfortunate—I'm very glad indeed to hear that you are a quiet sleeper."

"Well, if I *should* begin to snore," I assured him, "just a poke or two from you and I'll turn over and it'll be all right. But you ought to have got a room to yourself if you aren't quite fit—" I couldn't help putting that in, for Lord knew I didn't hanker to be in the same cabin with him.

"I did try, but I had to be home on a certain date and this was the best I

could do. The perquisites of a professor's labors do not run sufficiently high to warrant the payment of a double fare. I will now retire."

Suiting his action to his elegant word, he retired. Crawled into his berth, drew the covers over himself, turned his back and settled down. Then he roused again, turned partly back to me, and remarked:

"I beg your pardon. Good night."

"Oh, good night," I replied, and soon after scrambled my way into my upper, turned out the light, hoped the steward wouldn't creep in during the night to shut the port, and dropped off.

Presently I was awakened by a sound of confused shouting and lay a minute wondering what it could possibly mean. There were the regular ship sounds, the rush of water and creak of machinery, the slipping and sliding noises you always hear, but rising above them a human voice—and suddenly I realized whose.

"Turn over," it was crying. "I beg your pardon, but won't you *please* turn over?"

"What?"

"Turn *over*—you've been snoring."

"Good Lord! Why didn't you poke at the mattress instead of yelling at me that way?"

"Poke—I did poke—might as well—" he muttered some more words that I failed to catch, and silence followed. I was tired, and it didn't take me long to fall asleep again.

But not for long. I became conscious of a commotion under me, a prodding, a lifting of the mattress, and started up with the confused notion that I was being robbed. As I did so there came a sort of groan from the berth below.

"I beg your pardon," it was the voice of my companion, "but I had to use my stick. My finger produced no impression whatever. You were snoring."

Well, it went on more or less that way all night. When the steward came in with the morning coffee and told me my bath would be ready in ten minutes I had just been waked by the violent

lapping of Mr. Dickson's cane against the edge of the berth and the sound of his voice, "I beg your pardon, you were snoring!" I gulped down the coffee and got out and splashed about in cold sea water till I felt better.

"Guess we were both restless the first night aboard," I decided. "Maybe, too, I've got a bit of a cold," and feeling more chipper, I went back to the stateroom.

Dickson was just leaving for his own dip.

"Sorry if I disturbed you last night," I apologized. "Must have been the first night—always restless, you know. Sure it will be all right tonight."

He looked fagged, but responded cheerfully enough:

"I'm sure I hope so, Mr. Walling. Possibly I was more than usually nervous last night. We can only hope for the best."

II

THAT was the last I saw of him, except for glimpses on deck, where he lay in his chair wrapped in rugs, his eyes shining with a kind of fanatical glare from under the visor of his very gaily plaided cap, until time to dress for dinner. The weather was fine, the ship hardly moved except to plow straight ahead, and the Ilvertons and I had enjoyed the day enormously. Both were good sailors, the mother had a lot of amusing gossip about friends we all knew, and Edith and I varied the program by playing shuffleboard, walking and dancing. I seemed to get closer to her every minute, and realized that there's nothing like a ship for helping forward a friendship into something—something else. Edith wasn't only the easiest thing in the world to look at, but a peach every way.

Dickson didn't dress for dinner, but he was shining up a bit as I came down, and greeted me in the somewhat ponderous manner he had:

"Good evening, sir. I shall be out of your way just a moment, please."

"Take your time. I hope you got a good rest during the day?"

He fixed those dark eyes on me.

"Unfortunately it is quite impossible for me to sleep during the day. It is one of my symptoms. I am suffering, as I think I told you, from a nervous complication that requires complete relaxation and undisturbed slumber for a period of at least nine hours—but though I repose myself physically during the day, the required sleep can only be had at night."

I couldn't think of any reply to this, so I just smiled. Drying his hands, he left the room.

I spoke to Edith about him at dinner.

"I was telling your mother I hoped I wouldn't draw a maniac or an invalid to share the staterooms with me," I said. "I've got something that's a little of both, I'm afraid. He's nutty on the subject of noise and the least sound wakes him. I can't breathe without his starting up with a shriek."

Edith smiled and wanted to know just how loud I did breathe.

"Who is he?" asked Mrs. Ilverton.

"A professor in some freshwater college—Dickson, M. B. Dickson. Tells me he's had some sort of nervous breakdown and came to Europe for his health."

"I wonder if he's one of the Maryland Dicksons!" Mrs. Ilverton exclaimed. "I used to know a Miss Dickson, a queer kind of girl who lectured on New Thought and Freud and that kind of thing—one of the first to do it. She used to talk a lot about her family in Maryland. She'd left them because they inhibited her, so she said, but she was awfully proud of being one of those Dicksons, Freud or no Freud."

"I might try singing 'Maryland, My Maryland!' to him if he gets restless," I suggested.

"I'd rather like to know what became of May Dickson," mused Mrs. Ilverton. "Almost anything might have."

"And you hope the worst, mother," Edith added, mischievously.

"Naturally," retorted Mrs. Ilverton, with a sweet frankness characteristic of her.

III

It was late when I went below that night, for Edith and I found that our steps suited so perfectly that we didn't care to stop dancing till the last call sounded. When I turned up the light I saw that the estimable Dickson was already in bed and presumably asleep. At least no sound came from him. I hurried and got into my berth, making as little rumpus as possible, but unluckily as I climbed in my foot slipped and kicked over a glass that fell with a clatter. He groaned, but I wasn't sure that I'd awakened him.

It didn't take me five minutes to fall asleep, and I don't believe I'd been asleep ten before the old game started in. Prod, prod, prod. Bang, bang against the side of my berth when the prodding didn't work. And toward morning he began to shout at me again.

"For heaven's sake, let me sleep," I bellowed, being worn out by then. "It isn't my snoring that keeps you awake, it's your own damned nerves, and I can't help them!"

"Snoring!" he came back at me, and there was a note of hysteria in his voice, "it isn't mere *snoring*—that's no word for your performance! It's incredible that one throat can produce the volume and variety of the sounds you give out. A whole menagerie would be put to shame by them—snores, indeed!"

Then we both shut up, and I turned back to sleep, only to feel the steward's hand on my shoulder and his "bawth's ready, Sir," in my ear.

Even the cold bath didn't bring me back to par that morning. I lingered over it too. I didn't want to go back to that crazy man in the stateroom. But the steward knocked and asked if I wouldn't please make room for the next number, so I pegged back and there was my friend sitting on the couch half-dressed, his head in his hands. He didn't stir.

That day I moved heaven and earth to get my berth changed. No use. The ship was crammed to the gunwales and

no one was willing to give up the place they had for any other. I heard, too, from the purser, that Dickson had already been trying for an exchange.

"Says you're a snorer, Sir. Seems a nervous sort of gentleman."

I laughed. Nervous! He wasn't the only one. I felt my nerves popping like those paper torpedoes kids fling about on July Fourth.

After lunch I fell sound asleep in my chair and when I waked Edith was beside me.

"Catching up on last night?" she asked. "And how does the other man look?"

I glanced at her with suspicion.

"Was I snoring just now?"

"Nothing to speak of," she answered, but I thought her eyes were evasive.

Later that afternoon I saw Dickson conversing with Mrs. Ilverton. They were leaning over the rail together, and looked chummy. It seemed kind of disloyal to me, and made me feel sore. I saw him again in the smoking room before dinner, talking to a couple of men. As I passed I distinctly heard Dickson say, "That's the fellow now," but when I turned my head in their direction they ostentatiously stared off across the room.

It was getting to be rather more than a joke.

IV

At dinner Mrs. Ilverton informed me that Dickson was one of the Maryland family, and she seemed quite excited about him.

"He was doing some wonderful research work, that's how he came to break down," she elaborated. "Been taking honors at the Sorbonne and everything. Did you know he'd written a book 'Adjusting the Inscrutable'?"

"'Night Thoughts,' would have been better," I put in, glumly.

Both ladies laughed sympathetically.

"Oh, well, the poor man is in a highly nervous state," Mrs. Ilverton said, "and then it seems your—your breathing has

been quite unusual. His description was really thrilling."

"I've heard that if you tie up your mouth so that it won't open you can cure yourself," Edith added, and it seemed to me that her voice was cold.

Well, I tried it. I was worn out, anyhow, and ready to do anything that would promise a night's rest for both Dickson and me.

"I hope I've solved the difficulty," I told him. "I'm going to tie my mouth up so it won't open, and then I think we'll be O.K."

"Please God," he muttered, but didn't seem specially uplifted.

I had a lot of trouble fixing myself up. Had to knot the handkerchief awfully tight to keep my jaws shut, and the knot fairly bored into me. I tried it on top of my head, under my chin and over one ear, but it was horribly uncomfortable, and finally I decided to use surgeon's plaster as well. I attached two strips carefully, one end of each over the upper and one under the lower lip. Then I loosened the handkerchief a trifle and lay down. It wasn't any too pleasant, but I felt it would do the trick, and presently I fell asleep.

I must have slept good and hard, for when I waked it was to an awful commotion going on in the room, and the light was up too. Dickson was positively howling, and beating on the side of the berth with his cane.

"Take it off, take it off," he screeched. "You're awful—I can't bear it any longer! I'll go mad. It's unearthly—like a soul in torment!" and he fell to groaning again.

"Soul in torment's about right," I tried to answer, but I couldn't speak a word. That confounded plaster seemed to have shrunk, and it was stuck to my lips too—fearful! I really did seem to be strangling, and I felt for a moment or two that I was going to die in that ridiculous situation. Then I got hold of a pair of scissors and managed to slit the two bands of plaster, and snatched off the handkerchief and my, what a long breath I took! By then Dickson

had buried himself in the bed-clothes, so I didn't say a word to him, but turned off the light and lay down.

But I was done for. Couldn't fall asleep. I was getting afraid to sleep. I'd just start to doze, and then start up with a convulsive shiver, all of a cold sweat. I could hear Dickson turning and twisting under me—sleepless too. Morning and the steward came and I hadn't had another wink, nor he either, I guess.

That day I caught several people pointing me out. After lunch I found Mrs. Ilverton reading in her chair, but no sign of Edith.

"I hope Miss Edith is feeling all right," I said, settling down beside her.

"Yes indeed. She's in the music room with Mr. Dickson. It appears that he's quite a musician, and you know how Edith loves music. They are trying over some new things he has with him—that queer, uncertain sort of stuff they write nowadays, you know, where you're not quite sure whether they've got started on the piece or are still tuning up. I can't understand it, but Edith says it holds interesting possibilities."

I grunted.

"Edith's awfully sensitive to sounds, too," went on her mother. "The least noise wakes her up, and when she was a child we had to move out to the suburbs, for New York was killing her. She's better now, but any loud or unusual sound will wake her right up and spoil the night for her. Very sensitive ears."

I suppose she knew just how hard a jolt she was handing me.

At tea time I found Edith chatting with a young fellow, and when she introduced us he grinned.

"You're the man that snores, aren't you?" he greeted me.

I felt my hands clench, but managed a laugh, and said that was something one had to take the other fellow's word for.

"I guess there's no lack of evidence," he put in, and haw-hawed again.

After tea Edith and I danced, but I

was feeling so fagged that I asked her to break off and sit out with me on deck. I got her nicely wrapped up in her rugs, established myself beside her and began talking over the Max Beerbohm show we'd seen together in London, when I woke with a start. Must have dropped off right in the middle of a sentence. I looked at her in a panic. Had I been snoring?

She was gazing out to sea, but there was a peculiar expression about her mouth, a sort of held-in, tight look, as if she were trying not to laugh—or to cry. Just then Dickson came up, muffled in a huge overcoat.

"How about a few turns, Miss Ilverton?" he wanted to know, and Edith got up and went off with him.

I stayed where I was, and I felt blue to the marrow of my bones.

Both Edith and her mother were constrained at dinner, and right after it Edith said she wanted to write letters and disappeared. I sat up on deck with Mrs. Ilverton doing my best to keep awake. She told me a lot about the Dicksons, how May had married some millionaire—"see what Freud does for a girl," she remarked—and how Dickson was the only son and owned a lovely estate in Maryland with a manor-house on it.

"After a year or so more at the college he's going to retire there to write and to indulge his passion for music. He's asked us to visit him there for Thanksgiving—it would be a most interesting holiday, I'm sure."

After a while she went below, but I didn't feel like turning in yet, so I strolled into the smoking room, and got into a little game there. Dickson passed through it once and one of the fellows at my table looking after him, remarked:

"There goes a chap that has my sympathy. Seems he's cooped up in the same cabin with the prize snore performer of two continents. He was telling about it this afternoon. He says the man's superhuman—sort of a mixture of a flock of geese before rain, a herd of laughing hyenas and someone

strangling to death. I'd kill the fellow if it was me."

My mind wasn't on the game anyway, so I excused myself pretty soon and went on deck for a turn or two. As I left the room I heard them begin snickering at the table I'd been playing at, and the man who had been talking and say, "Gee, but I did put my foot in it!"

I tried another stunt that night. Dickson seemed to be asleep all right, and I crawled into my berth without so much as daring to turn on the light. Then I stuck a piece of that plaster over my nostrils. I'd doped it out that if I snored with my mouth shut and the air going through my nose, I'd try what the other way round would do. It wasn't quite as uncomfortable, anyway, and I guess I fell asleep pretty soon.

Not a bit of use. It didn't seem a minute before that devil below was poking at me and yelling out, "If you don't stop, I'll murder you. Human endurance can go only so far with the insupportable."

I tried to talk back, but with my nose all done up my voice sounded so queer that suddenly I began to laugh—sort of hysterical, I guess—and the laughing sounded worse than the voice.

The rest of the night was like the others—no more sleep for me, and none for him either, so far as I could judge. That day I couldn't get a chance at Edith at all. I said something to her mother about feeling sore, and she looked sympathetic but turned the subject, only murmuring, "You must take into account dear Edith's extreme sensitiveness to any harsh, trying sounds." At dinner Edith looked perfectly ravishing in a floaty golden-colored dress, but when I asked her to dance she said she'd promised to teach Mr. Dickson to foxtrot. "With this feeling for rhythm he ought to be wonderful!" she exclaimed.

V

I SUPPOSE every man's gone through that sort of experience, but it doesn't

make it any easier. I felt I couldn't bear to share the room with Dickson that night, and after most of the ship had gone to bed I dragged my chair to the upper deck, wrapped up in all the rugs I could lay hands on, and prepared to spend the night there. Sometime before dawn I was waked by a hand shaking my shoulder, and a voice bawling in my ear.

"What is it, what's the matter?" I stuttered. I didn't know where I was, and had a sort of feeling that I was drowning.

"You'll have to go below, Sir" said the man who was shaking me. "Passenger's ain't allowed up here at night even in fair weather."

Then I saw what was up. It was pouring rain and I was almost soaked through. I staggered to my feet, thanked the sailor and made for the companionway and my room. At least the man hadn't said a word about my snoring.

I crept in quiet as a mouse and got to bed after dragging off my wet clothes without making a sound. Dawn was breaking, and I went to sleep in the dim light of it. Uneasy sort of sleep, for I kept hearing what seemed to be the echoes of my snores. At last I was waked right up, with a streak of sunlight across my face, coming through the partly drawn curtain of the port, and by jove, there was no doubt about it—the echo of a snore was ringing through the room!

It was more than the echo—it was the real thing! Snoring, voluminous, high, resonant snoring. Wonderful snoring. For a second or two I lay paralyzed, for I actually thought it was I snoring there, wide awake. Then it came to me.

I leaned over and looked below.

There on his back, with his mouth wide open, lay Dickson, sound asleep and snoring to beat the band.

I listened entranced. It was a shrieking sort of snore with queer catches and breaks in it—there'd be a shake and a quiver and then a long triumphant note soaring way up before

it cracked into pieces with a funny little grunt or two. There was a regularity to it, a sort of beat, and suddenly I remembered Edith's saying what a sense of rhythm Mr. Dickson had.

"Don't lose it even in sleep," I thought, and chuckled.

Just at that moment the steward came to the door. I made a sign to keep quiet and we both listened to the sounds coming from Dickson.

"Good at it, isn't 'e, sir?" the steward whispered presently. "You must be a pretty sound sleeper, Sir, beggin' your pardon, if you've been able to sleep through the noise, 'e makes. Somethin' wonderful, isn't it, Sir?"

I loved that steward. Tears of affection for him almost welled into my eyes, and his tip doubled at that instant.

"You've heard him before?" I insisted.

"Oh, yes, Sir! 'E's a wonder at it, Sir."

"But how do you know it was he and not I?"

At that moment Dickson shut his mouth and opened his eyes. As he did so he gave a terrific shriek.

"Oh! I can't stand it! I can't stand it!" he cried in a voice that sounded half demented. "Oh! It's too awful, too awful!"

My heart leaped.

"What's too awful," I cried in a great voice.

"Your snoring," he responded, and burst into tears.

"My snoring!" . . . I looked at the steward, and the steward looked at me.

"Bawth's ready, Sir," remarked the steward, and withdrew. . . .

I flew to that bath. My heart was singing. Before breakfast I'd walked a mile on deck. After breakfast I found Edith and insisted on taking her forward into the bows where the wind blew the smell of approaching land into our faces.

"Edith, aren't you glad to be getting home, after all?" I asked. "Won't it be good to be back? Oh, Edith—"

"I see you're feeling better," she in-

errupted. "I suppose it's getting back to your own rooms where—where—" she ended lamely.

"Edith," I said, "I haven't complained. I've kept quiet, at least during the day. But the truth is that I've been kept awake night after night on this trip by that man Dickson. He is the most consummate snorer—a troop of elephants couldn't beat him—he—he wakes himself up doing it and then blames—"

I didn't get any farther.

"I'm surprised at you, Mr. Walling," Edith broke in. "Mr. Dickson has had enough to bear on this trip without your calumniating him. A sick man, too! If you'll excuse me, I'll go and begin packing."

And with that she left me flat. . . .

I spent the last night aboard in the smoking room, drinking. But there were plenty to keep me company, so I wasn't noticed. Dickson disappeared right after dinner, and once, when I went on deck, I heard a murmur of voices and then a little laugh from the Ilverton's corner. The laugh was Edith's, and it was Dickson's voice that I heard say:

"And you are going to let me come to see you very, very soon,—dear?"

Yes, that's all. I'm not able to sleep yet without taking a bromide. And when I think what Edith seems to be letting herself in for — and she so sensitive to any kind of unpleasant sound—well, do you wonder I'm on a diet?



Insurgent

By Elisabeth Clarke

O H, to go back to the laughter,
The full years, now it's Spring!
Even the reckoning,
After.

Oh, for the youthful fears,
Some false lover's lips on mine!
The divine
Bitterness of tears.

Ah, for the ache and the sting!
I'd rather be dead and cold
Than be old
In April, remembering.



A MAN who moralises is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralises is generally plain.



PEOPLE with pasts expect too many presents.

Christopher Columbus, Jr.

By David Karsner

I

BARTON FULLER boarded the train. He found a seat in the smokers' coach and placed his box of worldly possessions in the wicket rack overhead. In his pocket he had three cigars which he purchased at the station, thinking that if he smoked his youth would be unnoticed. None would suspect he was a runaway or stop to question him. He began smoking.

The train was moving now. He was starting at last. Men shifted to more comfortable positions, and one could hear the rattling of newspapers as the passengers buried their faces into them to read the full accounts of the inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt. Matches were struck and soon the long coach was filled with tobacco smoke. It was thick and heavy and it made Barton's eyes smart and his throat burn. He wished he had thought to buy a newspaper at the station. What had the President said? He was a Republican President. Barton's father had been a Republican. If he were alive now he probably would have participated in some ceremonial way in Roosevelt's inauguration. Barton thought that if his father were alive he might be given a place in the President's cabinet.

This would make him the son of a statesman. He turned the thought over in his mind several times and he liked the sensation it gave him. Fuller would then have been a name of national acquaintance, carrying with

it power and prestige sufficient to keep it bright for many a day. What did the Fuller name amount to now? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

"Well, I'll make it amount to something someday," Barton said to himself. There were vagaries in his mind and he did not know how or where he would make his name. But he wanted so to do. He wanted to get along in the world. He wanted so much to be something, to build something in the world. That had been his mother's wish. Juanita had expressed it, too. "I'll get along somehow," he said to himself as he looked at his hands moving slowly up and down his knee caps.

Barton was soon startled out of this reverie by the sudden thought that he might be taken off the train at the next stop as a runaway and sent home. Home! Where was his home? He had not had a home for a whole year. He had run away from a boarding house. Despite the confidence that he felt in the justness of his step he was haunted by the fear that a thousand eyes were turned upon him, and he was afraid to look around. He sank down into the depths of the plush seat and, resting his chin in his palm, gazed out of the window. It was dusk. Lights were everywhere in the streets of these suburban towns through which trolley cars passed at a languorous pace. The train dashed by many way stations, dimly lighted, and row after row of cottages seemed to tumble into the black spaces of night out of which the train leapt like a mad, crazy

thing—lurching and snorting—defying distance. The conductor was taking up tickets. Barton handed up his quarter of a yard of paper without looking up.

"Going to Chicago?" asked the conductor.

"Yes, sir."

"Alright."

This trainman had a kindly face and he smiled good-humoredly at Barton as he returned to the boy six inches of his ticket.

Well, that was all there was to it, thought Barton; no one else would bother him now or ask questions. Baltimore was far behind and in that city were buried his father and mother, his childhood and—the memory of those evenings at the boarding house when the boys and girls danced and sang together while his sister Juanita played the piano. Barton was thinking of Ruth. Would he see her any more? How could he? She too, was a memory now. . . .

One evening as he passed her room on the second-floor back, her door was open and she was sitting in a low rocker by a little table reading a paper covered novel by Bertha M. Clay. Ruth was eighteen and pretty. She was vivacious and her gray eyes danced merrily. Her thick yellow hair was hanging loosely about her neck, and her blue cotton kimono ill-concealed an expanse of full white throat. She had called Barton into her room to show him, she said, some snapshots which she had taken a few days before in Harlem Square. As Ruth bent low to reach under the table for the tiny pictures, her kimono parted. Instantly the girl became conscious of the innocent disclosure and with perfect poise she held the tops of her robe together tightly against her throat.

Never before had Barton seen any girl like this, but he was not ashamed of what he had seen. He thought she was beautiful. There was something confident about her. Ruth was alone in the world. She had just begun

to teach in a primary school after graduating from a Normal. Once she had said to Barton, "I like you very much. You don't seem like a kid to me. You say such simple things so very soundly for a fifteen-year-old. You're handsome too, you know." She had squeezed his hand after saying that, and Barton knew she liked him.

As he stood there before her, half bent over the table looking at her pictures, he remembered the strange feeling he had experienced in her presence once before. What was it? Juanita had never stirred him in that way. But Ruth was different. She made him feel that he was a boy and she a girl. The touch of her hand to his was electric. The sensation pleased him and the newness of it frightened him. It was queer. Juanita would hold his head in her lap for hours, and run her fingers through his hair, and touch his lips with hers, but there was only peace and contentment in her sisterly caresses.

"Push the door to a little, please, Barton," said Ruth, "it makes a draught." When he returned she caught his hand and held it tightly against her breast. There was no design in her movement. It was innocent enough. It was unstudied. Boy and girl were galvanized by the contact.

"Isn't it silly of me to like you? I'm so much older than you, but then it's so easy to like you!" She released his hand and her arm encircled his waist drawing him down to her lap. Barton offered no resistance. Electrical currents were racing through his body and a new question was in his mind. Ruth pressed his knees between hers, and with her palm against his cheek she held his head close to her own. It had been only a moment's pleasure for a lonely girl eager to love and be loved even in a second-floor-back of a boarding house, but to Barton a new, strange world was thus vaguely presented. . . .

The train was coming to a stop at York, Pennsylvania. Maryland, too, was a memory now, a memory with Baltimore, and boyhood, and the boarding house, and Ruth.

"What an easy way to solve problems," Barton thought. "All you have to do is to get on a train and go far enough away." Yet, as the engine slowly puffed out of the station throwing a cloud of smoke against a church across the street, Barton knew that he had not answered any questions thus far on his journey toward a doubtful and dubious world.

II

"Do you mind me sittin' here, sonny?"

A large man with white hair showing beneath a wide-brimmed felt hat was settling himself in the seat beside Barton.

"No sir," replied the boy moving a little further toward the window. The man was about sixty, and he wore a great overcoat with a wide fur collar. This he took off, folded it carelessly and tossed it into the wicket rack beside Barton's box. He reached into his pocket and drew out a long curved stem pipe with a huge bowl. Filling it from a pouch, he lighted the tobacco and spat upon the floor.

"Whar you comin' from and whar you goin' to?" The inquiries were friendly and spoken in what seemed to be a Western drawl.

Barton replied without hesitation, but he disdained questions. Always he would rather ask questions than answer them. A man had once told him that was one of the prerogatives of a lawyer, and that he might be one some day.

"Goin' to Chicago, eh! Well I'll declare! Goin' alone?"

"Yes sir." Barton's heart was thumping. He was afraid this man might be a detective sent by his sister in Baltimore to find him and take

him back. The man's next remark partly dispelled this fear.

"S'been a long time since I was in Chicago. I ain't been out there since the World's Fair. Chicago's a wicked city, sonny. You'd best be careful. But I guess you got relatives out there, eh?"

"No sir, I don't know anyone in Chicago. I'm all alone."

Barton carved his body out of the plush seat and sat up straight. He felt at ease now. This man was kindly. The train was rattling along at a great clip, and on either side the country was black with night. Here and there an electric gong could be heard faintly tinkling at a crossing, and the lights of a little town would suddenly appear and then disappear in the gulf behind. The man puffed his pipe and spread his legs to spit upon the floor. He looked at Barton searchingly.

"Did your mother and father let yer go 'way like this?"

"My parents are dead. I have only sisters," Barton answered. He forgot to account for James, his older brother, who had not lived with them anyway. Little by little, and by degrees, the man learned the whys and wherefores of Barton's story, and he was pleased with the boy's self-assurance and bravado.

"You're a plucky lad, I must say that."

Barton was happy at this.

"I wish you was goin' somewhere else beside Chicago. It's a wicked city fer a lad as young as you to be goin' to. Hold-ups every night, and murders too, and bad houses keepin' bad women. No place fer a young boy to be in. Sonny, you gotta keep yer nerve up, and keep a straight upper lip to get through in Chicago. But I guess you'll get along all right. You seem like a likely boy. You look clean-cut to me."

There was a long silence now.

Barton was getting sleepy and he stretched his legs out before him. It was raining outside, and inside the

coach was cloudy with tobacco smoke. On a seat opposite an Italian took off his shoes and raised his legs to the seat, his head resting on his arm in the window ledge. In a seat behind him a negro was snoring and gulping down the smoke that filtered through his gaping mouth. In the rear two lusty youths were singing "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree," and in the middle of the coach four coatless men with tickets to Harrisburg were playing pinochle.

It was a motley crowd gathered in that train on Sunday night. Far back in the rear of the train were the several sleepers. Barton had seen them when he got aboard at Baltimore, obviously they were for the rich people. He never dreamed of getting into one of them. To Barton a railroad train was a nation in miniature. Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief; doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief. Kind called to kind, and like to like, and Barton, a poor little waif, a whiff off the human stream, felt one with the shoeless Italian across the aisle, and the Negro in the rear snoring and gulping smoke.

The train thundered on, screaming in the ears of sleeping towns and villages too tired to heed. Passenger trains and freights dashed past from the opposite direction, squeezing the air currents with furious impact between the tracks and rattling the windows. People going and coming, with uncertainty, business, pleasure, or grief awaiting to greet them with a smirk or a smile at the end. Restless and changing! The ebb and the flow! The depths and the shallows! The beginnings and the endings! These were the conflicting tides of fate and fortune compounded that beckoned people to move over the country, over the face of the world—in quest of the unseen, to know the unknowable, to grapple, to possess, to lose, to find again, here, there and everywhere—world without end.

The stoppage of the grinding wheels as the train pulled into the

depot at Harrisburg awakened Barton. He had been sleeping soundly. He found himself encased in the great coat of the old man who was still sitting beside him smoking his pipe.

"You slept like a good fellow," said the man. "Ain't you hungry? Better come out with me and have a little bite. We lay over here fifteen or twenty minutes." The invitation was accepted with alacrity, for Barton was as hungry as any boy should be who had not had his supper. His benefactor led the way to the lunch-room in the station and Barton ate heartily. The man paid the bill and it was not a small one considering the short time allotted.

Back in the smoker again, the man and boy talked. The pinochle quartette was gone and the singing youths were now snoring. The Italian across the aisle had waked at Harrisburg, and as the train departed he dived into a heavy brown paper bag among his possessions on the floor, producing half a loaf of rye bread which he gashed with a knife that contained a three inch blade, a cork-screw and a monkey wrench. From his coat pocket he fished out a large onion, slicing a half into layers for a sandwich. The remainder went back into his pocket.

Barton watched this scene with something of astonishment and amusement. The Italian looked happy and satisfied. The Negro never woke during the hubbub incidental to the crash and confusion of the train entering and emerging from the station. His mouth was open as wide as before and every now and then he would unconsciously moisten his thick brown lips.

"Whatcher goin' to do when you get to Chicago?" the man was asking Barton. The boy had not the least idea and the question startled him into a realization of something fearful, something about which he knew nothing, that lay ahead. Did someone ask Columbus what he was going to do if he reached America? Could

Columbus have answered? Barton had the advantage over Columbus in one respect. The boy knew he was going to find work. Columbus knew not what he would find.

"I'll have to get a job right away," said Barton.

"Well, what can you do? Do you know where to go to look?" the man probed.

"No sir," Barton replied, answering the last question first. "I guess I'll get along. I can do lots of things. They must need boys in Chicago to work like they need them anywhere else."

"I don't know anybody in Chicago I could send you to, but you try out in the Stock Yards. You'll find something there for sure."

Barton turned this over in his mind. The Stock Yards. He had heard of them. That was where they bought and sold cattle, sheep and hogs and slaughtered them for food. He had heard that the Stock Yards were the biggest in the world. A capital idea. He would go there for work at once. He had been in the clock and jewelry business in Baltimore, but did that matter? The stores of Harcourt and of Silver for whom he had run errands and washed and dusted counters and show-cases were only memories now with Ruth and Baltimore. That all belonged behind the train with the smoke that disappeared in the wind and clouds. This was a new beginning. He would start his own life in his own way, his sails set for any wind that blew. He was free now and this was no time to drop anchor in the past.

"I once had a boy somethin' like you," the man was saying half to himself. "He was a fine little lad, and I thought he would grow in my business and take hold of it when I got old. Well, I'm old now—goin' on to sixty-two next November—but my boy took to drinkin' and ran 'round with bad women. I had to put him away and he died of consumption." The old man spared

himself a gulp by puffing hard on his pipe and raising a cloud of smoke in his eyes so he could have an easy excuse to wipe them.

"Sonny, don't you ever drink nothin' but water and pop. And don't you go runnin' wild with bad women. Get a good girl that goes to church and she'll do more for you than all the young bloods are worth."

"What does he mean by 'bad women,'" Barton asked himself. He knew girls could be as mischievous as boys, but what of it?

Barton asked no questions of his benefactor. He felt the man's honesty and interest. He must know what he was talking about, and Barton thought he would find out those things later. The subject did not bother him, anyway. He was going to get a job and support himself without any help from his sister. What did he have to do with girls, good, bad, or indifferent? There was Ruth. Well, she merely happened to live in the same boarding house and liked him. There was no harm in that, surely. The thought occurred to Barton, was Ruth good or bad? He quivered a little as the thought of that moment in her room recurred to him. He had not thought it unclean then. Why, nothing had happened. What was ugly about a girl embracing a boy, and telling him she liked him, and kissing him, maybe. Nothing.

"He wouldn't mean Ruth," Barton concluded. The thought and the subject vanished.

III

THE train was tearing through the Keystone State toward Pittsburgh where it would arrive early in the morning. There were several stops between. Near Johnstown the man reached for his coat and got into it. Under the seat was his big leather bag.

"Well, sonny, I'm gettin' off at the next stop," he announced.

Barton had been dozing. He was very tired in body and brain. The events were crowding him. He was aware he was living in big moments, but they were wearing him down, reducing him at last to a sleepy runaway.

Barton sat up now. He liked this man and was sorry he was getting off. . . .

"When you get to Chicago let me hear from you, will you sonny? My name's Cook. I own Cook's Hotel. in Johnstown. If you ever get there sonny come to see me." The man's big palm completely covered Barton's hand. The train had stopped dead still. The train was like a giant racing up a mountainside felling timber in the ascent, and suddenly the heart stopping and running cold and then silence save for a little wheeze before the last flicker of life.

"Mr. Cook! Owns a hotel! Johnstown!"

There was a stiff bit of paper in Barton's hand that Cook had squeezed. The boy saw it was money. A ten dollar bill! He was happy and grateful. The big man had liked him and left him a token of good-will and fortune. The world, how good and kind men and women were in the world! They gave without asking. They not only gave advice, but money with it—and a supper at Harrisburg. Were all people so kind to each other? Barton asked himself. Did big men always help little boys like this? Did flaxen-haired girls squeeze their hands and kiss them? What a wonderful thing life was, anyway. Goodness! Kindness! Sweetness! Tears! Kisses! Barton's eyes were wet with happiness and gratitude. He loved everything. The men in the smoker with him—he liked them all. There were no color or race lines drawn in his mind. They were all brothers! "We're all just alike," Barton said to himself.

He fell fast asleep in his seat.

The next day's ride through Ohio

and Indiana was wearisome to Barton. He gazed out the window upon the great stretches of farm land and prairies, sprinkled here and there with a cluster of cottages, a store or two, a post office, a little railroad station. Every group exactly like the one before it. The pattern was progressive. There must be a factory somewhere where they laid out towns like these throughout the country, and shipped the pieces in freight cars like portable houses—each store and church and cottage bearing a number to indicate its location on the hillside or flatland.

It was late Monday afternoon. Great pillars of smoke were rising out of huge stacks. There were crisscrosses of tracks everywhere, and engines were switching box cars back and forth; this network of steel ribbon was entangled against the black earth which was smeared with heavy chunks of wood that held fast the shiny cords of steel, and between them were cinders and gravel and gullies. Smoke clouds hung low and an east wind was blowing them toward the city whose black, sooty walls were the factories and grain elevators and warehouses sprawling for miles through this lace of steel and wriggling freight trains that looked like huge snakes in distress. The air was vibrant with smoke, screech and gong. It was as though the devil were having his inning at last. The faces and hands of men at work here were black and begrimed like the windowless walls of the buildings that squatted Sphinx-like amid the dirt and metal.

Now there were row after row of low one-story and two-story frame dwellings stretching over the prairies, down the spine of which ran the needles of track and trestle, galvanizing it all into life and activity. The streets in this section, the southern wing of Chicago, seemed to be paved with wooden blocks, and many of the sidewalks appeared to be of boards. There were little patches of

green in front of some of the houses, but there was no life in the grass, and the scrawny trees looked as if they wished they had never been planted. Smoke and grime gave a sameness to the color of every house and shack as far as the eye could see, and the sullen March day heightened the drabness of the landscape. It was the kind of day and climate suitable for funerals, not one for Youth to be the groom to the bride of Fortune.

Barton was staring through the dirty pane in the smoker. He reached over his head for his box of worldly

possessions. Men were putting on their overcoats. Barton had no overcoat, but spring was coming soon, and what he did not have he made his mind say he did not need.

"Union Station, Chicago!" the conductor's voice called.

Barton stiffened his back. He grit his teeth. This was his goal. This was the gate to the West. It was a gray gate, to be sure, but it was open to him, and he passed through it with firm step, his blood running warm with confidence, his head clear, and in his pocket his fingers touched eleven dollars.



O, Forests, Build Me Cages!

By Charles Divine

O, FORESTS, build me cages!
And, fences, weave a mesh
To keep me from the highway
Of fury and of flesh;

For city men are lusty
And foot it fast in town,
And women good to look upon
Go passing up and down.

O, forests, build me cages,
And I will never sleep;
And weave a mesh, O, fences,
And see how fast I leap!



ENVY is appreciation with a bad taste in its mouth.



WHILE Truth remains naked, she will be avoided: women will have none of her, and men dare not.

Two Letters

By L. M. Hussey

I -

LAESSLE walked into his studio, closed the door, and locked it. His face was a little flushed and his sensitive lips were curled into a slight sneer.

He stood inside the room and stared about him with an antagonistic eye, as if the chairs, his desk, and the piano were hostile personages. Then, casting his eyes upward toward the ceiling for a moment, he seemed for a moment to seek heavenly witness of his tribulations.

He crossed the room and sat down at his desk. Taking up a pencil, he poised it over a sheet of ruled music paper under his hand. He tried to resume the labor of a previous hour, that is, the orchestration of one of his compositions for the piano. But his mind was dull and his ear refused to imagine the colors of the orchestral instruments.

"Damn!" cried Laessle. "Damn this kind of a life!"

The fact was, he had just quarreled with his wife. It was not a vulgar quarrel, but one of those insidiously disturbing encounters of the intellect, an exchange of sarcasms and ironies. Laessle was a decorous man and Jeanne a polite woman. In quarreling they dealt in the subtleties of mutual depreciation. But wouldn't, the composer wondered, a physical row be preferable?

"If you threw a dish," he muttered, "smashed a clock, broke up a chair or two, you might feel—well, the physical exhaustion of an accomplished task. . . . Useless to try to go on this way!"

Indeed, his nerves jangled like dis-

cordant intervals. He threw down his pencil and stood up. He couldn't work; the day was lost, a day stolen abominably out of his life. He ran his fingers through his hair until it stood up all over his head like thick grass. His irritation passed into anger, and he circled the room several times, tramping hard upon the carpet. The strings of the piano vibrated a low cacophony in sympathy with his hard steps.

Pausing abruptly, Laessle stared at the closed door. In the silence of the room he thought he could hear the faint movements of his wife in her bedroom.

Probably she was dressing to go out. He imagined her at the moment, seated before her mirror, thrusting hairpins into her black hair, touching up her lips, rubbing powder into her cheeks. He even saw her plainly; he perceived her slim, white arms, the oval of her white face, the contrasting jet of her coiled hair.

Suddenly, staring at the closed door and visioning Jeanne so plainly, it surprised him how little charm he found in the vision of her! Abstractly she was charming, of course—but for him, as an emotional being, there was nothing moving in her. She was like—like a certain chord, even a strange, uncommon chord, played too often and cheapened for the ear.

He dropped his eyes and looked down at the carpet. In this moment of a great admission, the admission of an insensible heart, he struggled with a new and startling resolution. Against this his old sentimentalities took issue, old memories, old instants of delight. But Laessle shrugged them away, set his

teeth a little, and walking straight to the door he opened it.

When he entered his wife's bedroom he found her, as he had imagined, seated at the mirror, with her long black hair held in one hand, a single black tress, while she combed it with the other hand.

"Jeanne, I want to talk to you," he said.

"Well, Dick," she answered, "I think we've talked enough for today. Really, I'm tired to death of talking to you!"

"That's it! I'm tired of talking to you, Jeanne. I'm—tired of a good many things."

For a moment she looked up at his reflection in the mirror, wondering, suddenly, at the firm set of his mouth, the hard, steady gaze of his eyes. Then she turned on her stool and faced him.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Jeanne," he said, "I don't suppose we're doing a great deal of pretending in our own hearts, but why should we even keep up the appearance of pretense? Don't you think we've gone far enough?"

She did not reply at once. To Jeanne Laessle this was an anticipated moment, and yet it came now too abruptly. She felt cold, chilled, and still her cheeks burned hot in the same instant. A deep regret assailed her and she wondered if the shock of an impending separation could revive all the old ardour, the old madness. Then she was calm. She smiled a little.

"I was wondering," she began, "if you felt the same as myself, Dick. I've felt as you feel now for a long time. Yes, I think we've gone far enough. We don't need each other any more. We—we haven't anything more to give."

Laessle relaxed a little; his eyes softened slightly. But he steadied himself against a curious, unexpected flush of emotion. Averting his head, he seated himself on the edge of the bed.

"A divorce isn't necessary," he found himself saying. "Unless you want it. So far as I'm concerned, there's no one else. Maybe you'll want a divorce later. What I'd like to do now is just to go

away. I'd like to take a long trip somewhere—be strictly alone. I don't see why you can't remain here, stay right on here, if you like. I'll move out all my things. I won't want to come back. I've no use for this place!"

She shook her head.

"No, I don't think I'd like that," she answered. "I don't think I want to stay on here. You can dispose of this place, sell the house, sell everything if you want to. I'll just take a little apartment somewhere. It might as well be soon."

"Yes, soon," Laessle agreed.

"I'll try to look around a little this afternoon."

She turned and faced the mirror again. She examined her face in the glass, touched her lips with the rouge stick. Save for the soft sounds of her moving arms there were no noises in the room. Laessle sat in silence, feeling a bit unreal—for it was very strange, after all, that the end had come and both had agreed so easily.

He felt depressed, and a curious sadness came into his spirits like an unwelcome visitor. He was regretting his old illusions and, at the same time, accusing himself for the silliness of his regrets.

At last he stood up and walked to the door.

"Well then," he said, "you make your arrangements, Jeanne. And tell me what you need."

The woman listened to the sounds of his steps as they diminished in the hall. She heard him close the door of his study. Then she dropped her face in her hands.

She looked into the mirror, but she did not see the white, reflected image. She struggled against tears, but the tears welled up into her eyes and in them the squares of the windows, reduced and distorted, were reflected. Could this be the end! Could nothing be retrieved! She thought of running out of the room, running to Dick and holding him tight in her arms. Then Jeanne laughed.

"I'm thinking of another time," she murmured. "At this moment I don't love Dick any more!"

II

It was during the first six months of the separation from his wife that Richard Laessle completed a symphony. He had been alone, and the work went easily, with nothing to perturb, nothing to destroy the routine of his working hours.

All the small irritations, arising out of the clash of opposed temperaments, were effaced. It was possible to think almost exclusively of his composition and he spent long hours in setting it down, in making revisions. He was almost removed from life, and felt a unique contentment.

The work was scheduled for production by the orchestra at one of the early Autumn concerts. As guest conductor Laessle was invited to conduct the initial performance. For some weeks prior to this he was busy with rehearsals, and busy with the emendations suggested by hearing his work played by the band.

A passage of double-stopping for the first violins was found to be clumsy; it was stricken out. One of the themes in the adagio, announced from the woodwinds, was overpowered by the contrapuntal brass; the scoring was changed. The days were warm and Laessle rushed about in his shirt-sleeves, tore his hair now and then, blasphemed when necessary, and was happy enough.

It was not until the appointed night of the performance that a touch of unrest visited him. Or, as he reasoned in self-examination, not so much unrest as an emptiness—an inexplicable indifference. Even as he peeped out from the shelter of the wings at the crowded auditorium he felt none of the expected stir, no enthusiasm.

The orchestra was filing out to the stage; a kettledrummer was tuning his drums, tapping the membranes gently with his padded stick. The fifths of the violins broke out madly, like an insane eruption. The noise of the tuning

orchestra rose to a crescendo of unorganized sound. Laessle shrugged his shoulders.

Then, as he walked across the stage, straight to the conductor's platform, the noise was abruptly hushed. He bowed to the clapping from the auditorium, wondering again why he remained so curiously unmoved. The fantastic thought assailed him that to conduct this music was needless—he cared not whether it was heard or not. Yet he lifted his baton and the first violins broke into a nervous sawing on the upper E strings, taken up, an instant later, by the second violins a third lower, and progressing through all the choirs with a great verve, until, amid these dismaying sounds, a clear and lovely tune arose from the clarinets, subduing by its magic the first burst of the full orchestra.

Laessle conducted mechanically. The first movement ended with a *tutti*, and with the abrupt cessation of sound, he turned to receive the applause of the audience. Then, as he bowed, and grimaced a smile, his eyes were arrested by the sight of a woman, close to the stage, centrally located in the orchestra seats. She was looking up at him, seriously, thoughtfully.

It was Jeanne.

All the interval during which he conducted the second movement, he was impatient to turn again, to catch sight of her once more. This was an urge upon which he attempted no reasoning. It was—a kind of necessity.

From that unique presence a significance came to him. The emptiness of the previous moments had departed. He gazed at her steadily when he turned the second time, but she did not meet his eyes. A short intermission followed and the orchestra left the stage. When Laessle came back with them Jeanne, for whom he searched at once, was gone.

An hour later he switched on the lights in his apartment and removed his silk hat and cloak. A fire was burning in the small grate and he sat down before it.

"Do you wish anything else, sir?" his servant inquired.

"No; you may as well go to bed now, Bolton."

The room was warm; it was soundless with the same silence that had appeared and comforted him for the past months. Yet now this silence was oppressive. It was—empty.

"What is it I need?" Laessle asked himself.

He stood up, abruptly. He walked up and down the room, several times, trying to shake off his mood. But it would not pass; it persisted. He craved something—a face, was it, a presence?

Then, curiously impelled, he walked to the telephone. He knew his wife's address, and now he hunted for her telephone number in the book. The operator received it, and after a brief interval he heard her voice.

"Jeanne?"

"Yes."

"I saw you tonight."

"Dick," she asked, coldly, "why are you calling me?"

"A moment ago I couldn't have answered that question myself. Now I know. Because I want to see you. Can you grant me that, Jeanne?"

"No, I don't believe I can. I don't especially want to see *you*. I'm not sure why I went to the Academy tonight. Certainly it wasn't with the idea of reviving anything between you and me."

"Well, Jeanne, I've been very comfortable during these past months; probably you've been at ease too. I don't say I want to revive anything. But for some reason, I do need to see you tonight, Jeanne; I can't deny that fact—badly."

She did not reply.

"If you'll wait for me I'll drive around in the car; that won't keep you waiting very long."

"I think you're silly, Dick."

"Perhaps. May I come?"

He waited, and finally she said:

"For a moment, then—if you want to."

He hurried out and drove through the streets with a curiously agreeable

anticipation in his blood. The elevator took him up to his wife's apartment; and at the closed door he paused an instant before he knocked. She opened it; he saw her hand extended and their fingers touched in a formal greeting, and Laessle found himself looking about the unfamiliar rooms.

"Do you want to see my place here?" she asked.

"Yes."

He consented because it was well to do something. An unexpected, an embarrassing constraint existed between them. Each found it difficult to talk to the other. Their formality was a sham of which both were conscious, for it was very natural that the memories of old intimacies should spring up into their minds.

It was while examining a vase that Laessle turned abruptly and faced Jeanne.

"Jeanne," he said, "can't we talk like human beings? For an hour, anyway? I don't feel like going back to my rooms yet. There's something unrestful in my blood tonight. I don't know why it is—but it satisfies me to be near you just now. For a little while, anyway, I don't want to leave you. But here—"

"Well?"

"Too unfamiliar, I suppose. We don't seem to get on at all in this place. We're both confoundedly uncomfortable. After a while we'll just be sitting without a word, staring at each other. Silly. Let's go out. Come with me for a while in the car; we'll drive around a bit and then I'll bring you home. Will you do that, Jeanne?"

"Wait a moment," she said.

He was uncertain of her consent until, having hurried from the room, she returned with her wraps. They got into the car together, sitting side by side. Laessle headed the machine for the suburbs. The chilly autumn air beat into their faces.

Laessle did not try to talk. It was for a little while, good to sit near Jeanne—but this proved an evanescent content. Strangely he found himself growing angry. He was not angry with any in-

dividual, nor with any limited set of facts, but with life itself, with the fundamental deceptions of life.

Now and then the wind, sweeping over crosswise, carried to his nostrils the evocative scent of the woman's perfume. Then, without turning his head to look at her, he could recall with a poignant clarity all her charm, and some of his old delight in it.

These memories maddened him. She was there, with nothing abated of her charm, and yet he no longer loved her. Once, years before, she had been the greatest of his illusions; her presence had been a magic to warm and stir him.

How irrational was this! Essentially she was unchanged, her face, her voice, her person. Where were the old illusions? This was life's trick, this theft of romance! Against his life Laessle experienced the anger one might feel toward a personal antagonist.

The wind blew hard into his face. He gripped the wheel and drove straight down a dark road, while a phantasmagoria of fences, trees and fields flowed out behind the car.

Jeanne touched his arm; he shook off her fingers. Perhaps she was trying to warm him.

Suddenly a blinding light shone straight into his eyes. At an acutely angular turn another car had swung into the road. Awakened out of the forgetfulness of his anger, Laessle pressed hard upon the brakes, and swerved to the side.

He heard Jeanne scream; her voice seemed remote.

Their car rode up upon the embankment, turned tilting upon the lower wheels, trembled an instant like a dying top—and overturned.

Laessle experienced a swift, intolerable sense of pain, flashes of vivid light blinded him and then, consciousness was lost.

III

He awoke and found that he was in bed. Jeanne was in the room, sitting near the bed, looking at him.

"I brought you home," she said. "Do you feel much pain now?"

He didn't reply, but looked at her with inquiring eyes.

"Not very serious," she answered. "You were stunned, of course, and the worst thing is your leg is broken; you're badly shaken up, too. I'm lucky. I escaped with little more than a torn frock."

He looked about the room and for a moment, in the confusion of a mind just emerged from unconsciousness, he found it unfamiliar. This unfamiliarity passed into surprise and he was astonished to find himself in their old home, which, since the separation, had been left unchanged.

"There was no other place to bring you," Jeanne was explaining. "That is, no other place where I could conveniently stay too. Don't move around in the bed, Dick. Try to sleep again."

He closed his eyes. A brief sigh, one of childlike content, passed in a breath over his lips. Jeanne was remaining! There was something immeasurably contenting in this assurance. He accepted her nearness as a necessary thing, but he felt no wonder. His imagination was dull, his mind inactive, and indeed, for several days, Laessle remained in this condition of quiescence.

He knew that Jeanne came and went in the room, but he seldom spoke to her and she, on her part, did not attempt conversation. Much of the time he slept. The stillness of the house and his own lassitude soothed him, but it was even more soothing to be rid of that recent, oppressive sense of emptiness. Vaguely, it seemed to him that he had captured old realities, that he had been rescued from a nightmare of fantastic solitude.

Then, little by little, some of the urgency of life returned. He talked more with Jeanne, spoke to her about impersonal things, his music, the conditions of art, and little commonplaces of everyday. She brought books to the bedside and read aloud to him—it was pleasant to hear the sound of her voice. It was a sound familiarly to evoke other

days, and often he was on the point of recalling, in their conversations, some old intimacy—but a shyness restrained him.

He found himself wondering what impelled her to remain with him during these days, but of course he did not ask her.

More than a month passed and one day Jeanne appeared with a pair of highly varnished crutches tucked under her arm, telling him that he was now permitted to go about the room a little.

"You'd better learn to use these," she said. "I guess you'll find it pretty hard at first."

She held out her hand to him as he adjusted the instruments under his armpits. Leaning upon her, more than upon these clumsy sticks, he made his way to a chair. The perspiration beaded his forehead and he sank into the chair with a surprising exhaustion. Jeanne laughed. Looking up into her face, Laessle laughed with her.

"I feel like a child," he said.

He met her eyes for a moment and it seemed he found a momentary tenderness there; the realization of this flushed him with an unwonted warmth. He waited, his breath withheld, as if in expectation of some thrilling event. But Jeanne, dropping her eyes, turned away.

Now, for the first time, a sharp wanting possessed Richard Laessle. Hastily he put out his hand and his fingers closed eagerly upon her dress.

"Jeanne!" he exclaimed.

She turned, meeting his eyes once more. Laessle tried to speak, but his thoughts, his emotions, were confused, and no words came to his lips. Yet he held the edge of her dress between his fingers, feeling it necessary to restrain her going, else, should he release his hold, she might pass out of his grasp forever.

Jeanne's cheeks flushed abruptly.

"What is it?" she asked, her voice hesitating.

He shook his head, keeping his eyes on her face.

"I—I don't know what to say, Jeanne."

She was silent.

"You reminded me very suddenly, just now of—of the other days," he faltered. "I remembered how desperately I was in love with you then, Jeanne. It used to be when you passed near me I felt a little shock, a kind of acute tingling, as if all my nerves were responsive to your nearness. How can such a response go completely? Aren't you the same? The same woman, Jeanne? Am I so changed?"

He paused.

"Why was it," he went on, "that we separated? One of our silly quarrels. I remember that, well enough. What on earth did we find to quarrel about, Jeanne?"

She was still mute, but these two, their glances meeting, deemed themselves then transported to former days of illusory romance. In that instant time might have been magically turned back. Impulsively Jeanne sank down at his side, and taking his head between her palms, she pressed her face close to his.

"We'll begin all over again, Jeanne."

"Yes," she answered, "all over again. I suppose I hoped for that all the while. I must have been hoping for it when I went to hear your symphony, to see you conduct. What else took me there?"

IV

LAESSELE and his wife believed themselves to have captured something ineffable. It was, as Jeanne put it, almost to grow young again. With a delight of unique discovery, they revived old habits, forgotten endearments. Nevertheless, after a few weeks, both were puzzled.

In his study, one afternoon, Laessle paced between the table and the window wondering at his own uneasiness. Familiarly he could hear Jeanne moving about in her room, and his first impulse was to go in to her. Then, with a startled lifting of his brows, he realized

that his unrestful mood would not be cured, just now, by any of the recent gestures of affection.

He leafed a book on the table and stared thoughtfully at the carpet.

Again he wanted something; a distressing emptiness had returned.

He could no longer hear Jeanne's movements beyond the partition wall. In fact, she was seated before her mirror now, motionless, staring at her own reflected image, and she found this frowning.

"I wonder why I feel so tired," she whispered.

She heard Dick's footsteps in the study. At once she was startled by the fear that he might join her now—and it came to her with a unique force that she wished to be alone. If he came she would have to smile, kiss him perhaps, receive his caresses.

"A masquerade!" she cried, involuntarily.

At last she had found the word! The past weeks were illumined by it—and she perceived how hopeless it was, after so many years, permanently to bring back the ineffable savor of old sweet-nesses. As memories they were very dear—but their reality was departed. Masquerading!

"We can't go on!" she whispered.

Deliberately Jeanne opened her *escritoire* and spreading out a sheet of tinted paper, began to write.

"Dick," she wrote, "this time I am making the separation. Surely you have imagination enough to understand! I'm going now before we spoil things again. When would we have the first of our new quarrels? Next week, or next month? But sometime, surely sometime, soon. Let me go this time. Don't try to bring me back. This was only an interlude. Forgive me. I don't want to hurt you too much."

She sealed the letter, and sat for a while listening. The subdued sound of Laessle's footsteps was no longer perceptible.

Indeed, he had seated himself before his table, unresolved, yet trying to assert his sophistication and experience. When he thought of Jeanne it was tenderly.

Nevertheless, he said to himself, "we have tried, foolishly enough, to be children again. Can't do that. Not possible!"

His lips moved with whispered words. "It's better," he whispered, "to hurt her now, with one single hurt, than to renew the old succession of hurts."

Then, pulling a page before him, he wrote:

We can't go on, Jeanne. I suppose I'm too old. I don't know how to be sentimental any more. I'll break out sometime; I'm full of confounded irritations and can't help it. We'd decline into the old way. I ought to be able to contain myself, for surely these last weeks have been worth any kind of an effort. But, somehow, they've begun to lose reality. Can you understand? You'll forgive me, won't you? I'm getting too old to be romantic."

He folded the note and walked to the door. In the hall, nervously, he put on his hat and coat. He tiptoed into the living-room, the written sheet in his hand.

He was about to lay it on the table when he heard a quiet step, turned with a start, and saw his wife standing in the door. She held a sealed envelope in her hand. She wore her hat and wrap.

"What is it!" he exclaimed.

She did not answer, but he noticed the pallor of her cheeks—and then the white square between her fingers. Suddenly, with an ironic twist, he smiled.

"You've done the same thing!"

"What do you mean, Dick?"

"A note for me?" he asked.

His own fluttered out of his fingers and drifted to the carpet. Jeanne's eyes dilated with surprise. Her lips tightened, and a flush touched her cheeks.

"This is amusing," she said, slowly. "I was—silly enough to think I might be hurting you."

"And for my part—"

"And for your part," she interrupted, with abrupt energy, "you simply lacked ordinary courage. Exactly. Too bad I interrupted you. You were sneaking out very quietly, Dick, like a small boy badly ashamed!"

"And you, Jeanne?" Laessle inquired, the ironic note emphasized. "Was your method very different?"

"I could," she continued, "laugh at such a silly weakness. What a silly picture you make, standing there, caught trying to run away. You never could be frank, anyway."

Laessle rubbed his hands slightly. An angry zest enlived his mood. He was about to retort more directly, fling forth some adroit sarcasm, when he observed the vital glint in Jeanne's dusky eyes. Her whole face, her whole person, every curve of her slender body, were vividly alive! And with this recognition the words he was about to say were forgotten in the sudden illumination of their true relationship.

Amazingly he began to laugh. She stared, flushing with anger.

"Jeanne, Jeanne!" he cried, "neither of us will go now, Jeanne. Don't you see, we've found what we want, found our real selves again? I know you now as well as I know myself! We spent a rotten bad time during our separation, and it'll be just as unbearable again. Empty. . . . Lifeless days! We've been together so long we can't live apart any more; without each other the days are not real."

She tried to speak, but he raised a subduing hand.

"Wait—please, Jeanne! Don't you

understand? We've been trying, these past weeks, to play at being mooncalves again—and of course, we've failed at that. We don't need from each other any impossible poetry—that wasn't what I missed in you or you missed in me. What we wanted was just our genuine selves. Quarrels, a bit of the good old bickering, reconciliations—the familiar way. Can't do without it. Our reality. Just now, when I saw your eyes sending out angry sparkles, I understood. To lose that, to go away again and have the days drag with none of the fine old diversions, no excitements, nothing to stir one up and make one boil now and then—it would be worse than dying, my Jeanne!"

He saw that her cheeks were white against the dark curtains that hung down to the floor. She stood like something slenderly carved against the heavy curtains, one hand grasping the brocaded fabric. Her lips were parted, her eyes glowing, wide.

Then Laessle advanced and captured her in his embrace.

"We'll quarrel this out later, dear," he said. "Can't do it now, when it's so good to have discovered you again. I've got you back, the old Jeanne, the one that can be angry, snappish, spiteful—as well as delicious. And you've got me too, a devilish irritable duffer, but the one you really wanted, eh?"



Love's Way

By Eugene C. Dolson

*What you have denied to others
You give to me unasked;
For it was not with words
That I wooed you.*

*Even so, Endymion
Stood silent upon Latmos,
And the Goddess Cynthia
Descended and flung herself
Into his open arms.*

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he would do it. But he can't. He has no arms. Neither does he have a backbone. How much worse off is a man who was given a good backbone and a pair of arms—and won't use them.

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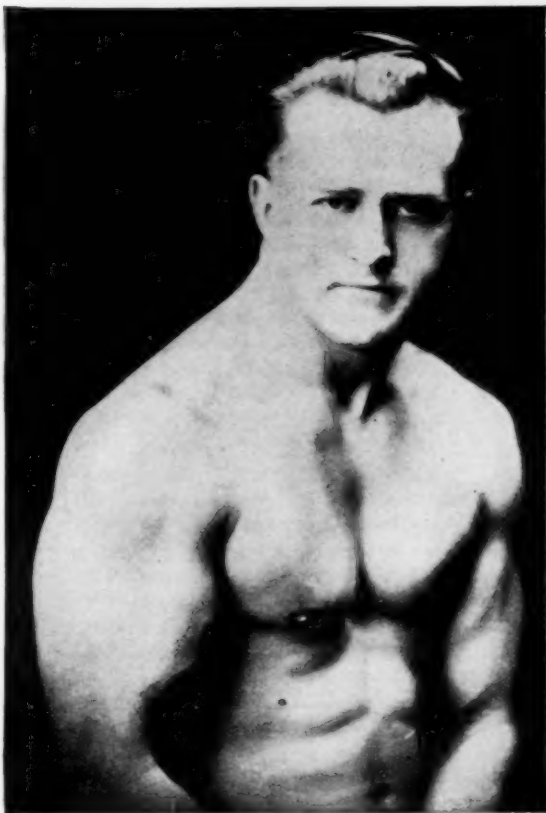
We excuse the jelly fish. He never had anything to work on. But there is no excuse for a flabby, round-shouldered and flat-chested specimen of a man. You were given a perfect framework for a body. You were meant to rule the world, but there is hardly an animal alive which does not show better sense than you do.

CUT IT OUT, FELLOWS

Brace up and be the man you were meant to be. Don't try to imitate a jelly fish. Get some pep into you and make a real He man out of yourself. Come on and let me help you. I'll shoot a thrill into you that will make your old spine quiver with excitement. I'll build up that chest, broaden those shoulders and give you the huge, muscular arms of an athlete. And that's not all. Your lungs will start pumping real oxygen into your blood, purifying your entire system. Those old cobwebs in your brain will disappear. Your eyes will radiate the life within you. You will have a spring to your step, and every move you make will show new life and energy.

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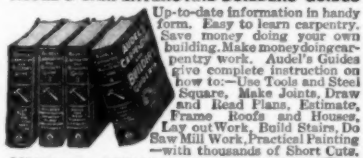


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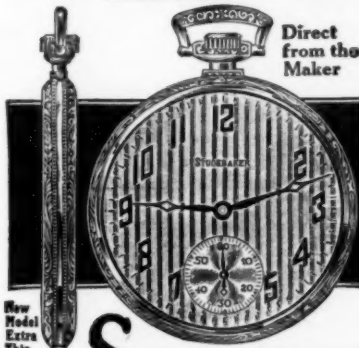
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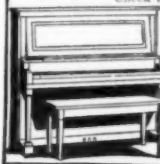
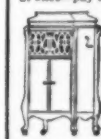


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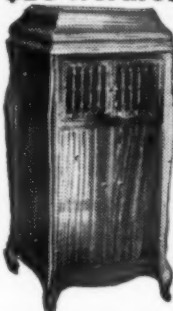
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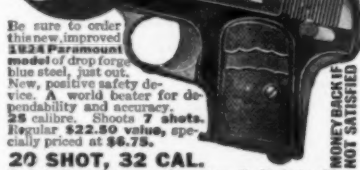


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Price

Adult's size, 50c; Youth's size, 35c; Child's size, 25c. Canadian prices same as U. S. A.

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and BETWEEN
MASSAGES THE GUMS

The Secret Revealed!

When the sphinx first smiled across the sands of Egypt—sound teeth glistened in the mouths of those ancient people. Their gums were kept sound and strong by natural massage afforded by the coarse foods they ate.

Today—though modern diet makes decay more prevalent—you, too, can have sound teeth and healthy gums. The secret is—twice-a-day brushing and gum massage with a tooth brush built small and scientifically shaped to fit your mouth.

Dr. West's tooth brush not only keeps your teeth clean—and polished—but stimulates gum tissues by proper massage.

Dr. West's TOOTH BRUSH

WECO
Product

The Western Co., Chicago; New York—West Products Co., Limited, Toronto, Canada